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Must they? Summer of the *PDA

* Public display of affection

Toxic lettuce! Why the top microbiologist won't eat salad

Police probe whether Widdecombe suspect linked to Farage arson

Steven Swinford Political Editor

Police are investigating whether the man charged with the murder of Ann Widdecombe is linked to an incident in which a lit incendiary device was pushed through the letterbox of Nigel Farage's home.

Joshua Kerry, 28, has been charged with Widdecombe's murder last month at her home in Devon. At first, Devon and Cornwall police had ruled out a political motivation for the Reform UK politician's death, but the case was transferred to counterterrorism police.

Kerry was arrested on suspicion of murder on July 11 and arrested again on July 13 on suspicion of the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism.

On Friday, counterterrorism police investigating Widdecombe's death said that they had reopened an inquiry into what had been described as an attempted burglary of Farage's home.

The Reform UK leader told The Daily Telegraph in April that an incendiary device had been pushed through his letterbox that "luckily ... burnt itself out in the porch". Reform UK declined to comment on the report.

The investigation, by the Metropolitan Police and Counterterrorism Policing (CTP) London, was closed and no arrests were made.

After the investigation was reopened, counterterrorism police said they had identified a line of inquiry that "was not identified and pursued by them at the time" and which "may have been relevant". The force has referred itself to the police watchdog.

The Times has been told that police are examining whether there is a connection between Kerry and the incident, and that Farage has been informed.

At a press conference yesterday after a meeting with counterterrorism

Continued on page 2

SNSM

'Mega-dinghy' carries 230

A huge inflatable boat carrying a record 230 migrants arrived in Dover yesterday morning. The 15m-long vessel was said to be "buckling" in the water as it headed towards the British coast. Politics, pages 6-7

Burnham demands plan to keep PC's killers in jail

Prime minister 'confident' of success despite warnings that it will be impossible to prevent release

Steven Swinford Political Editor

Andy Burnham has told his justice secretary to draw up plans to prevent the early release of PC Andrew Harper's killers and present them to parliament amid a mounting backlash from the victim's family and the police.

The prime minister was said to be "increasingly confident" that a "solution" could be found despite stark warnings from officials that it would be impossible to prevent the release of Jessie Cole and Albert Bowers.

A government source told The Times that Burnham had "never accepted" that he must choose between releasing "perpetrators of rape, grooming and the killers of police officers". He has told Alex Norris, the new justice secretary, to find a solution before parliament returns next month.

It remains unclear how ministers will prevent the release of Cole and Bowers, two of those responsible for Harper's death. Burnham has asked officials to look into an exemption for the killers of emergency workers, though Downing Street has admitted that it will not be possible without keeping all those convicted of manslaughter behind bars.

Before making his announcement last week, Burnham was presented with two options that would have prevented Cole and Bowers's release, but did not pursue them. Under the two proposals, all prisoners sentenced to either more than ten years or more than seven years would not have been eligible for early release. Cole and Bowers were each sentenced to 13 years for manslaughter.

Burnham chose a third option, based on the type of offence rather than on length of sentence. The decision means that prisoners convicted of rape, serious child sex and other grooming offences will remain behind bars. Officials made it clear that choice meant Harper's killers would still qualify for early release.

A Whitehall source insisted there were "no good choices" and that even if Burnham had gone for one of the first two options, it would have meant rapists and sex offenders given shorter sentences would be released early.

Other, more radical options were rejected because they were deemed impractical or too expensive. One involved turning a former holiday camp into a prison but officials said it would have been suitable only for Category D prisoners. Another option involved

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Daily pill for weight loss will keep you slim for life

Eleanor Hayward Health Editor

The UK has become the first country in Europe to approve a daily weight-loss pill that can be a "treatment for life" to stay slim and put type 2 diabetes into remission.

Orforglipron, made by the US firm Lilly, will be sold under the brand name Foundayo. It helps people lose 12 per cent of body weight on average and trials show it is an effective long-term "maintenance" tool to stay healthy.

Yesterday, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) approved the drug for use in the UK for patients who are obese, or those who are overweight with a related health condition. About 20 million people in England could be eligible.

The drug will initially only be available from private pharmacies but is expected to be given the green light for NHS use within months, after a cost-effectiveness evaluation by regulators. It works by targeting the same GLP-1 receptors as jabs including Ozempic, Wegovy and Mounjaro.

Orforglipron is taken as a daily tablet, and there are no restrictions on the time of day it is taken or on food or water. This makes it more convenient than a rival Wegovy pill, made by Novo Nordisk and launched in the UK last month, which can only be taken in the morning on an empty stomach.

Experts have described weight-loss pills as a "holy grail" and suggested they could be taken by millions of NHS patients to prevent conditions including type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Price details have not been released but in the US, where it was approved in April, orforglipron is sold for about half the price of weight-loss injections. The weight-loss jab Mounjaro costs up to £340 a month depending on dose.

Pills are cheaper to manufacture and store, as they do not need to be kept in a fridge, although they are slightly less effective than GLP-1 injections.

Julian Beach, the MHRA's executive director of healthcare quality and

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Today's highlights

7am **Sally Jameson**, housing and communities minister

7.35am **Dr Jo Saxton**, right, Ucas chief executive

10.10am Former detective superintendent **Stuart Blaik**, who led the Andrew Harper investigation

12.45pm Historian **AN Wilson** on whether Britain should have a written constitution

5.35pm **Claire Ward**, mayor of the East Midlands

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TODAY'S EDITION

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Has Farage's Clacton by-election backfired?

Nigel Farage has had a tricky summer – not the ideal preparation for Thursday's by-election. Before the vote, we headed down to the seaside in Essex to see how locals are feeling about it all

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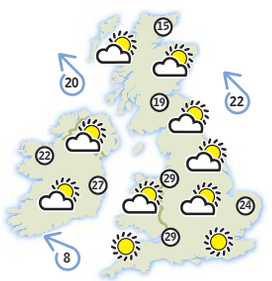

Mainly dry and warm or hot with plenty of sunshine, especially in England. **Full forecast, page 44**

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High street revival will offer chance to shutter vape shops

Oliver Wright Policy Editor

Andy Burnham has promised to bring high streets "back to life" by allowing towns to block gambling, gaming and vaping shops and giving councils powers to prevent "garish" neon signs.

All new vape shops will require planning permission, meaning they can be prevented from opening near schools, under the plans, which the prime minister is to announce today.

The government also intends to revoke the Gambling Act 2005's "aim to permit" rule, which restricts the ability of councils to refuse permission for betting and 24-hour slot machine shops even where there is public opposition. Adult gaming centres, which offer 24-hour gambling machines, will also require planning permission.

Downing Street said "clearer expectations" would be set out for the appearance of high street shopfronts. The "best examples of attractive, thriving town centres from across the country" would be identified and councils would receive practical guidance on improving high streets.

Vape shops and barbers that have been associated with organised crime and illegal working have proliferated in recent years.

The Centre for Social Justice think tank has found that since 2016 Britain has lost nearly 1,800 pubs and bars, while the number of vape and tobacco shops has increased to almost 2,200.

Ministers have announced that shops believed to be involved in illegal activity can be closed for up to a year to allow police and councils time to conduct investigations. Burnham has also said that he will review relief for business rate reliefs for shops that "do not make a positive contribution".

Concerns have also been raised about the clustering of gambling premises, particularly in more deprived areas. The London borough of Brent has more than 80 gambling venues. In another borough, Harlesden, there are ten betting shops within a ten-minute walk.

Under the Gambling Act, brought in under the Blair government, councils and the Gambling Commission must err towards granting permission for gambling premises.

Burnham said that for too many people the high streets that they "grew up with have been hollowed out and become unrecognisable over decades of decline. The rise of vape shops, betting shops and rogue operators have replaced the shops, services, and community spaces that people are crying out for. That's not on."

He added that Labour would give people "a real say" over what opened on their high streets. Local councils would be given the powers they needed to rein in unwanted shops and bring town centres back to life.

High streets were "the beating heart of local communities", the prime minister said. "But for too long Westminster has stood by while they have been in decline. This government is committed to restoring our high streets and bringing back hope across Britain."

Joshua Nicholson, head of housing and communities at the Centre for Social Justice, said: "Britain's high streets have been hijacked by a growing number of dodgy vape shops, mini marts and barbers, many of which are linked to organised crime.

"The government is right to give councils new powers to say no to these dodgy shops. High street renewal is vital to restoring security within our communities."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Suspect 'link' to Farage arson

police, Farage said: "This is directly linked to the murder of Ann Widdecombe." He described the decision to reopen the case as "unprecedented".

Farage said he believed counterterrorism officers had "made some mistakes" in the original case but that he still had confidence in them.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct is investigating the "conduct" of a CTP London staff member.

Farage said that his party "had been treated very differently to everybody else before the death of former MP Ann Widdecombe". He added: "It's a great, great tragedy that it took the death of Ann for the security services in Britain ... to finally take seriously the safety and security ... of Reform politicians.

"Up until that moment, we had been treated very differently to everybody else."

Asked whether he still had confidence in the police, he said: "The fact that counterterrorism have been honest enough to say, 'Mr Farage, when it came to the incident that happened to you in April 2025', to publicly admit they got it wrong and to refer themselves to the IOPC.

"Now they're obviously very, very scared of what the truth is when it comes out. But the fact they've done that shows you they're not trying to cover up, they're not trying to ignore, and I have to say, I have met Laurence Taylor [the head of CTP], and I did feel a great, great confidence in it."

Widdecombe, 78, a former Conservative minister and spokeswoman for Reform UK, was found dead at her home in Haytor, Devon, on July 9.

In a statement Taylor said: "I want to make it very clear that our investigation into [Kerry], determining his motivations and any wider activity he may have been involved in is continuing.

"As with all murder investigations, understanding the 'why' is a key part of our enquiries," he said, adding that it was "a particularly intensive and complex investigation".

CTP London has been contacted for comment.

Farage defends El Salvador jail plan

Aubrey Allegretti
Chief Political Correspondent

Foreign offenders sent to El Salvador under plans by Reform UK to ease overcrowded prisons will not be held in "cages", Nigel Farage has suggested.

The party's leader was trying to allay concerns of human rights abuses and head off claims people could be held in the notorious Cecot facility — the biggest jail in the Americas.

Reform is planning a trip to El Salvador to inspect the suitability of facilities to hold thousands of people removed from UK jails. Its plan is to rent cells in foreign countries for offenders who cannot be returned to their countries of origin. Reform also wants the army to erect prefabricated jails on Ministry of Defence land as an alternative to Labour's early release scheme.

Farage said "not all the prisons" in El Salvador contained "the cages that you've seen on television", in reference to a documentary by Richard Madeley about Cecot broadcast this year.

The film showed jailed inmates forced to eat the same basic meals every day with nothing to read apart from the Bible and lights on all night. Cells contain dozens of people sleeping on metal bed frames. Visitors are prohibited.

Farage said: "We want to make sure that the conditions are sensible and reasonable and appropriate." He added that Reform's promised prison-building drive would mean facilities were "basic" without "many colour TVs".

Sources told The Times that any prisoners removed to the central American country would require access to healthcare, education and outdoor exercise, under Reform's plan.

Reform UK said it would "free up 10,000 prison spaces by removing all foreign national offenders". However, about a third of those in custody are believed to be on remand, meaning they are yet to be tried. Farage said the cost of his scheme would be half that of housing foreign offenders on UK soil.

Amnesty International UK criticised the plan. It said: "Reform is proposing to contract into serious human rights abuses in El Salvador ... financing brutality with British taxpayers' money. Amnesty has documented mass arbitrary detention, beatings, torture and other ill-treatment, enforced disappearances, denial of medical care and deaths in custody in El Salvador."

Mark Fairhurst, national chairman of the Prison Officers' Association, said Reform's plan was unlikely to survive. He told Times Radio: "He will come up against loads of human rights arguments ... You need to look at the jurisdiction. Who's going to supervise prisoners in a foreign country when they're serving a sentence under the British criminal justice system?"

Behind the story

Sending foreign offenders to jails in third countries presents serious legal, diplomatic and practical problems, as previous governments can attest (Aubrey Allegretti writes).

David Cameron earmarked £25 million from the foreign aid budget in 2015 to help build a prison in Jamaica for about 600 Jamaicans in British jails to serve the remainder of their term. However, in 2017 Jamaica rejected the offer on the basis that the terms would not have been "beneficial".

In 2023 Alex Chalk, then the justice secretary, suggested renting prison cells in Estonia, but the plan never got off the ground. Concerns were raised about the value-for-money of leasing foreign cells, transporting inmates internationally and maintaining proper staffing.

Legal watchdogs also pointed to problems with language barriers, isolation far from families, and a legal requirement to match domestic British rehabilitation standards overseas.

NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM

Peeko, an African penguin, and Pedang, a Sumatran tiger, both had acupuncture

Zoos and vets see the point of animal acupuncture

Tash Mosheim

For most animals, a trip to the vet does not involve sitting patiently while a dozen needles are inserted into their body from their back down to their ankles.

But for Peeko, an elderly African penguin at the New England Aquarium in Boston, Massachusetts, acupuncture became part of her routine medical care after she developed problems with her spine and joints.

The bird underwent 15-minute sessions in which about a dozen hair-thin needles were placed across her body. Far from putting up a fight, her keepers said she appeared to relax during the procedure and would even preen staff while being held.

Peeko died aged 31 last year, well beyond the 10 to 15-year life expectancy of African penguins in the wild. But she was far from the only unusual patient to find herself at the sharp end of an acupuncture needle.

Acupuncture, once associated with alternative medicine for humans, is being deployed on an increasingly eclectic collection of animals, from lions and llamas to lizards and labradors.

At Fife Zoo in Scotland, Ebony, a 12-year-old ring-tailed coatimundi, was given acupuncture after developing age-related arthritis.

Keepers noticed that the South American mammal, a member of the raccoon family, was becoming lame, reluctant to move and less interested in food. She was prescribed medication, but vets from the University of Edinburgh's Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies suggested adding acupuncture to her treatment.

Monika Nawrocka, an exotics veterinary nurse, carried out regular sessions with the zoo and subsequently reported improvements in Ebony's mobility, mood and appetite.

Lucifer, an Asiatic lion, was treated after a wound from a foot operation failed to heal

"People think that exotic animals don't experience pain because they are largely non-verbal and their behaviour can be unique," Nawrocka said. "However, by studying their behaviour you can identify if they are in pain."

Sophie Varawalla, a practical instructor in animal management at Capel Manor College in London, said identifying pain requires looking for changes in an animal's normal behaviour, as well as physical and verbal signs. These can include limping, sitting away from the group, becoming less active, grimacing by squinting their eyes or scrunching their noses, or vocalising when touched.

Carolyn Smith, a small animal vet at London Veterinary Acupuncture, said the treatment itself could be "profoundly relaxing", although this varied between animals. "Often treats help too!" she added.

Smith said animals generally did not need to be trained for acupuncture, but they needed to be comfortable with being handled. With newer patients, she gradually builds up the number of needles and the areas of the body treated over several weeks.

In 2014, an altogether more formidable patient underwent acupuncture at Paignton Zoo in Devon. Lucifer, an Asiatic lion, was treated after a wound from an operation to remove a tumour from his foot failed to heal properly. The acupuncture was intended to reduce pain and improve blood flow.

Dr Charlotte Inness, a veterinary surgeon who has used acupuncture on horses and dogs, said: "From a Western veterinary perspective, its effects are thought to involve stimulation of the nervous system and the body's own pain-relieving and repair mechanisms, including effects on neurological, immune and hormonal pathways."

But how can a vet know whether it has worked when the patient cannot say that it hurts less? Smith said vets can use pain scales alongside more everyday measures, such as whether a cat can jump onto its favourite chair or if a dog can climb the stairs more easily.

"Often the patients are able to handle themselves with more ease and look more 'natural' in their movements after treatment," she said. "They can often perform better during physio and hydrotherapy sessions after too."

Inness has used acupuncture on horses for a wide range of problems, from chronic pain to digestive complaints, breathing difficulties, fertility problems and even behavioural issues. She has also treated dogs suffering from arthritis and spinal problems.

Some animals receive electro-acupuncture, where a gentle electrical current is passed between the needles to provide stronger stimulation.

Inness said: "One of the important points about veterinary acupuncture is that I don't see it as an alternative to conventional veterinary medicine. Rather, it can be a useful additional treatment within a broader clinical approach, particularly where pain is chronic or conventional treatment alone isn't providing sufficient relief."

The appetite for such treatments may also reflect changing attitudes towards pets.

Hedda Båverud Olsson, co-founder of Lassie, a pet health and insurance company, said younger generations were increasingly treating animals as family members.

"The humanisation of pets has changed what owners expect," she said. "When you see your pet as a member of the family, you are naturally more willing to invest in their health and consider a wider range of options to support their wellbeing."

Olsson said owners were moving from reacting to when a pet becomes ill towards trying to maintain its health and spot problems earlier, with younger owners increasingly bringing the habits of fitness trackers, health apps and preventative human healthcare to the animals sharing their homes.

Happy, angry or scared? Dogs can tell by the look on your face

Kaya Burgess Science Correspondent

Dogs can tell from tone of voice or body language if their owner is pleased or upset, but how much can a canine read from human facial expressions alone?

Now, MRI scans on dogs have revealed that they can not only distinguish between positive and negative emotions on human faces, but can even differentiate between feelings such as anger, fear and sadness.

Humans and dogs have lived side by side for at least 15,000 years, with some estimates placing the start of the domestication process to 30,000 years ago.

The two species have learned to read each other's emotions over millennia of cohabiting, allowing them to grow into effective teammates when hunting, playing or protecting their kin.

A summary of a new study, published in the journal iScience, noted that dogs "watch human body language, listen to nuances in our voices and detect information from our scent" when trying to read our emotions. The researchers set out to find out how well dogs can read emotional cues in human facial expressions and whether they could pick up subtle differences between emotions.

"Humans are really good at picking up small details on the face, and so are dogs," said Raúl Hernández-Pérez, first author of the study, from the University of Vienna. "By studying their brains, we can understand what adaptations have developed to support their remarkable social and emotional understanding of humans." Eight dogs were placed in a functional MRI scanner, and shown a selection of images of humans — all of strangers — with either happy or neutral expressions.

When viewing the happy images, the temporal cortex and caudate nucleus in the dogs' brains lit up. These are areas associated with cognitive processing and feelings of reward. "The activity in the caudate nucleus is particularly interesting," said Laura Cuaya of the University of Vienna. "It suggests that happy human faces may have emotional significance for dogs."

The researchers then showed 12 dogs images of faces displaying happiness, sadness, anger and fear to look at subtle patterns of brain activity in different regions. Angry and scared faces produced different patterns in the dogs' temporal and occipital cortices. Faces showing sadness and fear also produced different patterns in a region called the right rostral suprasylvian gyrus.

The study involved border collies being placed inside an MRI scanner

There was no clear difference in the pattern of brain activity when viewing angry and sad faces, however. This means dogs may rely more heavily on other cues such as body language and tone of voice in these instances.

Most of the dogs tested were border collies, which are skilled at following social cues. Further studies would be needed to show that other breeds are as responsive to facial expressions.

It is not clear, however, how far dogs understand what the different emotions mean. The study notes: "Across human facial expressions, happiness has the strongest representation in the dog brain." It concluded: "To the best of our knowledge, this is the first evidence that dogs can distinguish between two human faces showing negative expressions."

News

JEFF J MITCHELL/GETTY IMAGES

Reflected glory Drew Lausch entered Edinburgh's World of Illusions to promote his Fringe show Friendliest, a dark comedy about his childhood and gay superheroes

England leads world in mission to eliminate 'curable' hepatitis C

Eleanor Hayward Health Editor

England is "leading the world" in eliminating hepatitis C after an NHS drive to diagnose and cure 100,000 people of the disease.

Health officials say that deaths from the virus have fallen by 36 per cent over the past decade and the country is on track to wipe out the disease by 2030.

Hepatitis C is spread through contact with infected blood and can cause life-threatening liver damage if untreated. It is most common in people who have been exposed to non-sterile injections including from drug use or getting tattoos abroad.

In 2015, the NHS rolled out pioneering antiviral drugs that are taken for 12 weeks and cure 95 per cent of cases. Since then more than 100,000 people have been treated. The NHS has launched a drive to detect more cases including by offering free home testing kits and more routine testing in A&E.

Professor Frankie Swords, NHS national medical director, said: "Hepatitis C can cause serious harm, including liver failure and cancer, yet many people live with it ... without knowing or having any symptoms ... until it's too late. That's why the NHS has worked hard alongside public health teams and charities to find and treat hidden cases, and it's encouraging that over 100,000 people have now received potentially life-saving treatment in just a decade.

"England is now leading the world in the mission to eliminate this disease and is on course to beat the World Health Organisation's 2030 target but we are determined to keep up the momentum and finish the job. With hepatitis C curable in more than nine out of ten cases, we are committed to finding and treating everyone who needs support and urge those at greater risk to come forward by ordering a free and confidential home testing kit online."

Yvette Cooper, the health secretary, said: "We are leading the world in wiping out this disease for good. This is exactly the kind of preventative, forward-looking healthcare that we want the NHS to deliver across the board — catching illness earlier, easing pressure on hospitals, and giving people the chance to live longer, healthier lives."

Rachel Halford, chief executive of The Hepatitis C Trust, said: "We are on the cusp of one of the most significant public health achievements in our country's history. To sustain this momentum, continued commitment and long-term investment are essential."

Health officials have urged people at risk of undiagnosed hepatitis C — including those who have had a tattoo abroad, who have moved to England from certain eastern European countries or have previously used injectable drugs — to order a home testing kit.

Adults born in Ukraine, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Albania, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Czechia or Slovakia are urged to test, as many could have been potentially infected through medical or dental procedures before 1991.

Paul Eatwell, 65, tested positive for the virus after routine liver function tests flagged an abnormality. The grandfather from Blackburn, Lancashire, said: "My first reaction was disbelief. I didn't feel ill. I kept wondering how I could possibly have caught it.

"The support from the specialist team made a huge difference. Their message was simple: 'Don't spend your time worrying about how you got it – focus on getting rid of it'."

While it has not been established how Eatwell caught the virus, it was suggested that surgery in South Africa decades ago was a potential factor.

He added: "If you think you may be at risk, why wouldn't you have the test? It gives you peace of mind. Treatment today isn't life-changing in the way people might imagine — it's one tablet a day for 12 weeks and a few blood tests."

Daily tablet for weight loss will help keep you slim for life

Continued from page 1

access, said: "Following rigorous assessment of orforglipron's safety, quality, and effectiveness, we are pleased to be the first regulator in Europe to authorise this tablet for weight management and type 2 diabetes. As with all GLP-1 receptor agonists, this is a prescription-only medication, and the MHRA will keep the safety and effectiveness of orforglipron under close review."

Tens of thousands of patients in the UK have started taking the Wegovy pill, which was launched last month at pharmacies including Boots and Superdrug and costs about £3 a day.

Two million people are taking weight-loss jabs and the launch of pills means that analysts expect seven million people in the UK to be on GLP-1 medications within a year.

The drugs provide an option for patients who are needle phobic, with early data suggesting that eight in ten people buying pills have not previously used weight-loss jabs.

In May, a major trial found that orforglipron can be used as a long-term "maintenance" tool to stay a healthy weight after weight-loss jabs.

The study, which involved 376 patients who had been taking Mounjaro or Wegovy, found that switching to the pill helped them maintain 75 per cent of their previous weight loss and kept blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar stable.

Dr Louis Aronne, an obesity expert at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York, said at the time: "A daily pill — it's treatment for life."

Dr Simon Cork, a senior lecturer in physiology at Anglia Ruskin University, said the approval for orforglipron was a big step forward in the treatment of obesity. "This drug is likely to be much cheaper than currently available medications," he added.

Quintagram® No 2643

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Maxillary area of the head (3)

_ _ _

2 Office worker (5)

_ _ _ _ _

3 Agent of mechanical mischief (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

4 Moorland plant (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Wedding attendant (10)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	A	B	C	D	D	E
E	E	E	E	G	H	H	I
I	I	J	K	L	L	M	M
N	R	R	R	R	S	T	W

Solutions see T2 MindGames p15
Cryptic clues T2 MindGames p14

Student officer arrested

A Greater Manchester police student officer has been arrested on suspicion of kidnap, rape and dangerous driving after a woman in her twenties called 999 from a vehicle in distress. The man, 23, was detained in his personal vehicle after a pursuit on the M62 in West Yorkshire and has been suspended. The force has referred the case to the police watchdog.

Drink-driving danger

August is the worst month of the year for drink-drive crashes, an RAC analysis found. An average of 721 people were injured or killed in drink-drive collisions in August between 2014 and 2024, compared with 663 in December. Warmer weather and longer evenings offer more opportunities to get behind the wheel after consuming alcohol, the RAC said.

Medieval pond dries up

Villagers are fighting to save their historic pond after it dried up in the heatwaves. More than 100 carp, the descendants of fish first stocked by monks 900 years ago, have died at Scotsman's Pit in Great Massingham, Norfolk. Some fish have been relocated to deeper waters and a GoFundMe appeal aims to raise £15,000 to clear silt from the pond.

Raid on high church

More than 1,500 cannabis plants have been seized from a former church in Nelson, Lancashire, after police spotted pipes running into the deconsecrated St Mary's Church on Manchester Road. A man was arrested after trying to escape through a window. He "failed to consider the impact the drop might have on his running ability", Lancashire police said.

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Former Clegg adviser denies sex attack at Lib Dem conference

Jaya Narain

Nick Clegg's former special adviser has denied sexually assaulting a woman at a party conference.

Neil Sherlock worked for the former Liberal Democrat leader from January 2012 until March 2013, when Clegg was deputy prime minister.

Sherlock, 62, is alleged to have sexually assaulted a woman at the Lib Dem party conference in Brighton, East Sussex, on September 18, 2007. It was reported to police in September 2023.

The former civil servant and consultant appeared in the dock at Hove crown court yesterday wearing a blue pinstriped suit and yellow tie.

Neil Sherlock was charged almost 19 years after the alleged assault

He spoke only to confirm his name and enter his plea.

Sherlock was told that he would go on trial on Monday November 29 next year and that the trial was expected to last four to five days.

He was remanded on conditional bail and ordered not to contact, or try to contact, the complainant.

At the time of the alleged assault, Sherlock was a partner at KPMG, the professional services firm, where he worked from September 1985 until December 2011, before joining Clegg's office.

According to his LinkedIn profile, achievements during his time working for Clegg include bringing in shared parental leave and extending flexible working.

The former civil servant was awarded a CBE in the 2015 Queen's birthday honours for public and political service.

Clegg was appointed Lib Dem leader in 2007, before entering office as deputy prime minister in 2010, when his party's coalition government with the Conservative Party was formed. He resigned in 2015 after the Lib Dems performed disastrously at the general election.

Sherlock lives with his wife in the leafy market town of Godalming, Surrey. The couple have two adult children.

He is now a partner at Acuti Associates, which he co-founded in 2023. The firm advises chief executives across the public and private sectors on navigating a "new, more uncertain" age.

Sherlock has also served as special adviser to Jonathan Holt, UK chief executive of KPMG, since 2021, as well as on the boards of several charities.

Sussex police, which is leading the investigation, said: "Police received a report in September 2023 of a non-recent sexual assault alleged to have taken place in Brighton in September 2007.

"Following an investigation, Neil Sherlock, 62, of Godalming, Surrey, was charged on 15 May 2026 with one count of sexual assault on a female."

Treasury's failures left PA distraught before suicide

Seren Hughes

The Treasury "materially contributed" to the death of a personal assistant who killed herself the day after she was told a complaint had been made against her, an inquest heard.

Chloe Moffat, 26, was "convinced that her career and reputation had been destroyed", her family said.

Surrey coroner's court was told that HM Treasury failed to inform her that she was unlikely to lose her job because of the disciplinary process.

The inquest heard that Moffat, who was a personal assistant to a director at the Treasury, was talented and "loved her work".

On May 19 last year, she attended a meeting with managers in which she was told about an allegation that she had shared sensitive confidential information about colleagues, which she had obtained as part of her role. She denied the allegations.

The assistant coroner, Anna Crawford, recorded a conclusion of suicide yesterday.

She delivered a short narrative that the Treasury had "materially contributed" to Moffat's death by not applying a written disciplinary policy. They failed to tell her that the probable penalty in the event the allegation was upheld would have been a written warning, not dismissal.

Moffat's relatives believe the Treasury "failed in its duty of care". Her family called for "meaningful" changes in the manner in which disciplinary processes are conducted and employees' welfare is protected.

The Treasury said that it was "considering the findings carefully" and had already introduced improvements to guidance, support and wellbeing arrangements, but recognised that it "must continue to take action".

Crawford told the inquest that it was "agreed by everybody" that Moffat enjoyed her job, had a good work record and had not previously been subject to any workplace disciplinary proceedings.

In the meeting with her line manager and a more senior manager, Moffat was informed that the allegations could be handled through a formal investigation or disciplinary meeting and that her access to the director's email inbox would be suspended.

She asked them whether she would lose her job, to which the senior manager replied that "she could not predict the outcome at this stage", the inquest heard.

Crawford told the inquest that Moffat was shocked and cried during the meeting. She texted a friend saying that she believed she was going to be fired, then called her mother, who tried to reassure her. They decided that Moffat would go to stay at her parents' house, and the next day Moffat took her own life.

MUCHLOVED/TRIANGLENEWS

Chloe Moffat feared that she would lose her job after an anonymous complaint that she had shared confidential information about her colleagues. A coroner said she should have been reassured by the Treasury that a written warning was the only possible penalty

The inquest heard that the two managers had read the policy but the senior manager described the situation as "high-level". Crawford said that had the policy been followed, Moffat would have been sent a letter setting out the details and would have been advised of the probable penalty. The coroner also said that it was a "matter of concern" that the information fact-finding meeting was standard practice at the Treasury and other departments.

Crawford said she would be sending a prevention of future deaths report to the Treasury, the head of the civil service and to Acas.

In a statement, Moffat's family said: "Chloe was a bright, caring and talented young woman who loved her family, her friends and her work.

"At a time when she needed support, reassurance and fair treatment, she was left frightened, isolated and convinced that her career and reputation had been destroyed.

"She was a much-loved daughter, sister and friend, and the loss we feel every day is immeasurable. We will continue to honour her memory and seek the changes needed to ensure that no other family suffers a similar loss."

The Treasury said: "We continue to mourn Chloe's passing as a colleague and friend. Our thoughts remain with her family and friends."

Met standards officer guilty of stalking ex-girlfriend

David Brown Chief News Correspondent

A Scotland Yard detective stalked his police officer former girlfriend for three months as well as telling her she "looked sexy" and that he imagined her wearing stockings.

Timothy Fory was an officer in the Directorate of Professional Standards, which investigates police misconduct, when he stalked Stephanie Lane, who was a trainee detective constable.

Fory, 34, from Balham, south London, was convicted of stalking amounting to harassment between July and September 2024. He was given a five-year restraining order banning him from contacting Lane. He was also placed under a 12-month community order involving 15 days of rehabilitation activity and 150 hours of unpaid work.

Westminster magistrates' court was told that he persistently contacted Lane on WhatsApp, followed her at a police social event and sent her former partner a malicious message on Instagram.

Timothy Fory had bombarded Stephanie Lane with messages

The pair had had a six-week sexual relationship, which Lane ended because Fory was "not respecting her boundaries".

George Crivelli, for the prosecution, told the court that Fory "bombarded" Lane with WhatsApp messages while other officers noted his "unusual behaviour" including "constantly staring" and following her during a police event.

In one message he told her: "Do you know how sexy you are looking tonight?" Lane replied: "Tim, you need to remember what we were talking about the other day."

She also told him: "I am starting to think that you have not registered that we are not seeing each other."

Fory replied: "I am very aware, but I am still going to imagine you in stockings." He later sent a message to Lane's former boyfriend, with whom she still lived, saying they had sex in his bed.

Lane said in a victim impact statement: "I am struggling to come to terms with being a police victim ... I find myself getting flashbacks if I deal with a similar case to my own."

Miranda Zeffman, in mitigation, told the court that Fory had developed a dependence on alcohol after a previous relationship ended due to infidelity. She said he would now lose his job.

Mega-boat will be first of many, ministers are warned

A so-called "mega-dinghy" carrying 230 people, including children, arrived in Dover at about 2.30am yesterday before being deflated on the quayside

Oliver Wright Policy Editor
Geraldine Scott Assistant Political Editor

Ministers are braced for further arrivals of so-called mega-dinghies carrying migrants across the Channel after a vessel with a record 230 people on board arrived in Dover.

The bespoke inflatable that had as many people on board as some long-haul passenger planes easily surpassed the previous record for a single vessel, set last month, when 165 people made the crossing in a single boat.

The boat, which measured 15m (49ft) long, was said to be "buckling" in the water as it headed towards the UK.

Senior government sources claimed that the latest incident, which they described as a "reckless and dangerous" journey, was a sign that its efforts to disrupt the people-smuggling gangs' supply chains was working. They said the gangs were being forced to resort to using larger boats as crossings were increasingly being disrupted by police operations on both sides of the Channel.

"Sustained pressure from law enforcement means the gangs are finding it harder to launch boats and are therefore being forced to place more people onto them," said one government source.

"While this boat is larger, the number of crossings is down significantly and we just had the lowest figures for a July since 2020."

But Nigel Farage, the Reform UK leader, described the latest crossing as evidence of a "national security emergency" and Chris Philp, the shadow home secretary, said Andy Burnham was "out of touch" with the situation on the ground in the Channel.

The Home Office has pledged to cut the time it takes to rule on asylum claims to six months, down from more than a year, to speed up deportations.

The target means individuals due to be deported will have their cases heard by a judge within 24 weeks of entering the country. The average wait time for a case to be decided by a judge is currently 67 weeks.

Ministers said the change would speed up the removal of those who were unsuccessful at appeal and have no right to be in the UK, free up space in accommodation and cut costs, saving as much as £6.9 billion.

The target will not, however, apply to the 150,000 asylum seekers already in the country whose appeals have yet to be heard. This could lead to these people waiting even longer to have their cases heard.

The overall number of arrivals on small boats has fallen sharply this year. The provisional total for the year stands at 14,819, 43 per cent lower than at the same point last year and 16 per cent below the equivalent period in 2024.

The latest incident suggests small boat gangs are changing their tactics to organise fewer larger crossing of migrants. The average number of migrants per small boat has increased from only seven in 2018 to 63 in the year to March and 70 so far this month.

The government said joint operations with France had prevented more than 47,000 attempted crossings and led to the seizure of 1,100 boats and engines since the election.

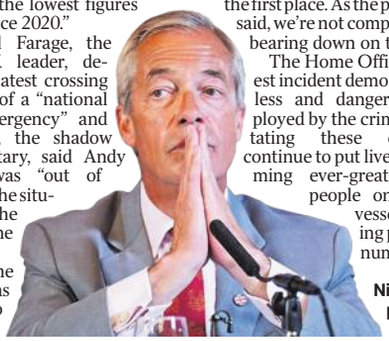
The prime minister's spokesperson said: "We've seen today some appalling images ... of young babies being put into these unseaworthy craft — and they're shocking images — and they show the reality behind the ruthless smuggling gangs that are prepared to risk human lives for profit.

"That's exactly why the government has signed a new payment-by-results deal with the French to prevent these perilous journeys from happening in the first place. As the prime minister has said, we're not complacent and we are bearing down on these crossings."

The Home Office said: "This latest incident demonstrates the reckless and dangerous tactics employed by the criminal gangs facilitating these crossings, who continue to put lives at risk by cramming ever-greater numbers of people onto unseaworthy vessels. We are making progress, with the number of small boat crossings down this year and the lowest number recorded for the month of July since 2020. But we must go further, which is why we have signed a payment-by-results deal with the French to put 40 per cent more boots on the ground on French beaches."

Farage said the numbers of people crossing the Channel in small boats were "still horrendous". He added that the crossings "should be declared a national security emergency", saying: "We have managed to stop some of the dinghies but it doesn't stop the problem. It doesn't go away. It is still something that is completely out of control."

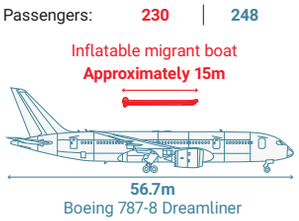
Philp said: "The French authorities could easily have stopped a vessel this size from embarking in shallow waters. I recently saw for myself French gendarmes standing by and doing nothing while illegal immigrants boarded in knee-deep water. [The home secretary] Shabana Mahmood is handing over £660 million of our money while this happens. It's a disgrace."



Nigel Farage at a press conference yesterday

How it compares

Passengers: 230 | 248



Cooper recruits 350 more

Poppy Koronka Health Correspondent

More than 350 additional jobs will be made available for junior doctors in England, the government has announced, as it takes the first steps to implement the plan to end strikes.

From this week, hundreds of extra training posts will be available for junior doctors, who ended their three-year period of strike action in June after making a deal with the health secretary at the time, James Murray.

The government agreed to add 1,000 more training posts this year, with up to 4,500 unlocked over three years. Posts will be spread across the country and specialties. Yvette Cooper, the current health secretary, said: "These 350 new posts will put us on track to expand training posts by a total of 1,000 this year, and up to 4,500 over the next three years. That will support NHS trusts across the country to meet the needs of their communities and increase the support available for patients in need of specialist care."

At the end of June, the British Medical Association (BMA) voted to accept the pay deal for junior doctors, who decided in 2024 to call themselves resident doctors.

In a ballot of members, 53 per cent of the 33,000 who voted agreed to accept an offer that will give them an average 6.6 per cent pay rise and create thousands more jobs.

The vote ended three years of industrial action by junior doctors. In total, they walked out for 65 days in 16 rounds of strikes, costing UK hospitals more than £3 billion.

Professor Frankie Swords, national medical director for the NHS, said:

SNSM

Release inmates on remand rather than killers, PM told

Geraldine Scott

Ministers could free prison space and keep those convicted of manslaughter behind bars by releasing thousands of remand prisoners on bail or with electronic tags, according to the head of the Prison Officers' Association.

Mark Fairhurst said Downing Street was wrong to claim it was impossible to exempt two of the killers of PC Andrew Harper from early release without risking prisons running out of space and that he was "positive" it was possible to create more prison spaces.

Jessie Cole and Albert Bowers are eligible to be freed in January, halfway through their 13-year sentences, imposed in 2020 for the manslaughter of Harper the previous year.

Fairhurst told Times Radio: "I'm positive we could free up additional space and block anybody convicted of manslaughter from early release.

"You only have to look at the remand population. We're knocking on to some 17,000 people on remand. I'm sure we could get a couple of thousand of them bailed or tagged with the GPS tag to monitor them electronically. That's an easy win for this government and I can't understand why they don't consider it."

Fairhurst backed probation officers considering striking over staff shortages, high workloads and concern about the early-release scheme. "I don't blame them and I wish them all the best. I don't blame them for walking out," he said.

"They've been treated absolutely appallingly. They're struggling to cope with workloads, never mind us heaping an extra 5,000 offenders on the doorsteps over the next ten months."

Downing Street had said that if ministers exempted Cole and Bowers, everyone convicted of manslaughter would have to stay behind bars, which would put too much pressure on the overcrowded system.

Some 5,000 prisoners are expected to be released early under the sentencing changes, down from 6,000 after ministers announced further exemptions following an urgent review.

The prospect of Harper's killers being included has been called "indefensible" by police leaders.

Aileen O'Connor, who chairs the body that represents officers in Harper's former force, Thames Valley police, urged Andy Burnham to "listen" to the public.

"The public are speaking loudly and clearly," she said. "They agree with us that the government are firmly on the wrong side of this. What they are doing is indefensible. And they simply cannot defend it. They must listen. The prime minister must listen." She added: "If you kill a police officer there should be no early release. No ifs. No buts."

Harper, 28, was caught in a strap attached to the back of a car and dragged down a country road as his teenage killers fled. The first responder to his death has accused the government of "spitting in the face of police officers" by allowing his killers to be freed early.

Chris Bushnell, a former Thames Valley police officer, was waiting in a lay-by for the vehicle when he saw it dragging his colleague's body. He pursued the vehicle but was ordered to stop over the radio.

Bushnell said: "To think they could be released early is absolutely outrageous. I'm angry with them, but I'm also angry with the government. They're spitting in the face of police officers."

Henry Long, who was driving the vehicle, was sentenced to 16 years and is not eligible for early release.

Offence type

Prison population under an immediate custodial sentence by offence group

	Men	Women
Violence against the person	22,964	1,048
Sexual offences	15,761	136
Drug offences	8,238	263
Theft offences	5,921	427
Robbery	4,633	207
Public order offences	2,730	117
Crimes against society	2,413	103
Possession of weapons	2,374	75
Summary non-motoring	833	60
Criminal damage and arson	833	53
Fraud offences	385	66
Summary motoring	215	7
Offence not recorded	94	18

Source: Ministry of Justice

Union chief positive space can be found

Continued from page 1

converting former Ministry of Defence houses into a prison. Neither option would have relieved pressure on prisons this autumn.

Burnham has refused to accept that the release of Harper's killers cannot be blocked and has been pushing hard for an alternative approach. A source pointed to other measures including releasing prisoners on indefinite sentences, repurposing women's prisons for men and pressing officials to speed up deportations of foreign offenders.

Yesterday the chairman of the POA, the union for prison officers, said he was "positive" space could be found to block anybody convicted of manslaughter from early release. Mark Fairhurst told Times Radio that bailing or electronically monitoring a fraction of the 17,000 people held on remand would provide an "easy win".

The government plans to release 5,000 criminals from October to free up places. Burnham considered plans to bar the release of killers of emergency workers but was warned that it would be subject to a legal challenge the government would lose because there was no specific offence for manslaughter of an emergency worker. The only way to stop their release would be to block the early release of all prisoners convicted of manslaughter.

Early release row, letters, page 20

Uncertainty aggravates distress of crime victims

Jessica Sharkey Crime Correspondent

Uncertainty about the early release scheme is causing "unnecessary distress" to victims, a campaign group has said.

Andy Burnham said last week that rapists, child sex offenders and grooming gang members would be excluded from the scheme and instructed the Ministry of Justice to check all grooming offenders after The Times identified cases that were not excluded from the scheme. Many took place before anti-grooming laws were introduced in 2003, so the men were charged with indecent assault, which did not fall within the exemptions to the early release scheme.

The Times has been told Burnham will not be able to keep them and other historic child sex offenders in prison unless he excludes everyone with a conviction for indecent assault.

Jade Belgrove, 30, who spearheaded a campaign against the early release of offenders, said the "constant back and forth has had a massive impact" on victims.

Victims of physical and sexual violence, including Belgrove, who was raped by a family friend when she was a child, have formed a coalition calling for a "comprehensive reform" of the criminal justice system.

Belgrove, whose attacker is not eligible for early release, said victims had been an "afterthought" throughout the process. "It's like a rollercoaster and our emotions aren't thought about at all," she said. "You're up and you're down, you don't know where you stand. Everything is turned upside down and you don't know how safe you are."

In a letter to victims, Burnham acknowledged that their campaigning "has meant returning to experiences that no one should have to endure in the first place".

Victims an "afterthought", says Jade Belgrove

Amy Clowrey, a director at Switalskis Solicitors, called for the government to ensure that amendments were accurate and that there were no "loopholes" before announcing any further changes to the scheme.

She said: "The 're-review' of the early release scheme is causing unnecessary trauma to survivors as they live with constant uncertainty."

The Ministry of Justice said it could not stop more offenders getting out sooner without risking prisons reaching capacity and collapsing. It said it was "pulling every lever to protect the public and cut crime".

doctors to ward off strikes

"This is one of many important steps we are taking to continue improving the working lives of our resident doctors.

"Without them we would not be able to deliver the high-quality care we provide for hundreds of thousands of patients every day.

"We want the NHS to be the very best employer for all resident doctors — and increasing training places and ensuring there are more opportunities in the specialties and areas we need them — is a key part of achieving that."

The next round for more than 650 additional posts is due to open later this year. The current provision of 350 posts exceeds the government's promise to create 250 more jobs at this point, due to trusts requiring a higher need for the training posts in their hospitals and communities.

According to the BMA, there were nearly 40,000 applicants for training posts this year in the UK, creating a "serious bottleneck" for career progression.

Professor Mumtaz Patel, president of the Royal College of Physicians, said: "The RCP welcomes the creation of more than 350 additional training posts for resident doctors in England, alongside new pilots to improve rotational training.

"Increasing training numbers is only part of the solution. Training capacity depends on experienced senior doctors having the time and resources to supervise, assess and support resident doctors. If we are to expand training successfully, investment in training posts must be matched by investment in the trainers and training environments that make high-quality medical education possible."

News

Civil service fury as leave for trans staff is scrapped

Geraldine Scott
Assistant Political Editor

Civil servants have threatened to back legal challenges against the government after officials scrapped up to 13 weeks of paid special leave for transgender staff undergoing gender reassignment. The Civil Service LGBT+ Network and a:gender, two employee groups, have urged Whitehall to halt the introduction of a replacement policy, and said they would no longer promote the Civil Service as an inclusive employer. Until now, transgender employees could take up to 13 weeks of special leave in a rolling 12-month period for medical treatment and recovery related to gender identity without it being counted as sick leave.

The provision was removed after analysis of equality law, "in mitigation of potential discrimination in respect of different provisions for other employees". The policy, which guides Whitehall departments, is being updated in response to the Supreme Court ruling last year which upheld that the meaning of sex in terms of the Equality Act is biological, and subsequent guidance released by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

A leaked draft seen by The Times said civil servants could be disciplined if they failed to address transgender colleagues using their preferred name or pronouns.

It also said transgender staff could take an extra 13 weeks off on top of sick leave for medical appointments related to gender reassignment. However, staff groups said this had been removed.

In a letter to Cat Little, the Civil Service chief operating officer, the groups said the reasoning was "potentially legally misconceived and harmful", and accused officials of "levelling down support for a protected group".

The two groups said that absence related to gender was not comparable with other forms of medical leave and treating it as such could mean transgender employees could be penalised or even dismissed.

They said staff could be forced to disclose sensitive medical information to managers to avoid sanctions.

The letter said: "This is needlessly cruel. The previous provision gave colleagues a clear route to support. Removing it risks replacing a known protection with uncertainty, discretion and disclosure."

The networks warned if the changes went ahead they would no longer "represent the Civil Service, support recruitment activity or promote it as an inclusive employer for LGBTQ+ colleagues in any capacity".

They also said they would support members to challenge decisions through formal complaints or legal proceedings, and could act as witnesses.

The Cabinet Office said: "Departments are expected to update their own HR policies and these are currently under review. It would be inappropriate to comment while this is ongoing."

The Civil Service LGBT+ Network and a:gender were approached for comment.

AARON CHOWN/PA

Ski funday The Duchess of Edinburgh at the Snow Centre in Hemel Hempstead, marking her appointment as patron of the Armed Forces Para-Snowsport Team

Cern scientist fears for UK's reputation after funding cut

Kaya Burgess Science Correspondent

Britain's withdrawal of funding for an upgrade to a key part of the Large Hadron Collider will damage British skills and scientific leadership and the UK's international reputation, a scientist at Cern has said.

The government has been urged to reverse the decision to pull funding from an upgrade to the Large Hadron Collider's "beauty" (LHCb) detector. The upgrade will allow it to detect collisions produced during a new "high-luminosity" phase as the experiment seeks to find the difference between matter and antimatter.

Scientists are concerned that funding for "curiosity-driven" research is being hit as priority is given to projects that offer quicker economic returns.

In a letter to The Times, Paula Collins, a physicist at Cern, said: "Describing LHCb as simply 'curiosity-driven' overlooks its wider returns. The UK's decades-long investment has built world-leading expertise."

Collins, deputy spokeswoman for the LHCb project at Cern, wrote that Britain held "leadership positions in the LHCb project and supported the European Strategy for Particle Physics, which includes the LHCb upgrade as one of its priorities. Yet UK funding for that upgrade has now been withdrawn."

She added: "The new Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade has inherited the consequences of this decision. It also has the opportunity to reverse it."

The Science and Technology Facilities Council aims to save £162 million by 2029-30. The government said: "Science is central to a better future for the UK. That is why we are funding research and development at record levels. We will also continue to demonstrate our commitment to science as the second-largest funder of Cern."

Letters, page 20

Professor hired after 'decolonise' call

Elizabeth Spring, Emma Yeomans

A Cambridge student association in the faculty that hired Jason Arday urged the university to "decolonise" and hire a more diverse staff two years before his job was advertised.

An open letter signed by 152 current and former students in the faculty of education called on the department to make "systemic changes" and "decolonise" its hiring practices during the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests.

It was sent to Professor Susan Robertson. On her retirement two years later Arday was hired for the post of professor in the sociology of education. Arday quit last Wednesday. The university began an investigation last week into his qualifications and honorary appointments. He also faces claims that he plagiarised parts of his PhD thesis.

The board of electors that appointed him has come under scrutiny after the head of the faculty claimed his research was the "best in the world". A Times investigation has found that his journal articles contained impossible data and evidence of fabricated interviews.

Two years before his hiring, students had asked the faculty to "review its application processes for unconscious bias". They added: "'We hope to see systemic changes to the Faculty such that the hiring, promotion, and retention of Black people."

The open letter was arranged by Fersa, the Faculty of Education Research Student Association, which represents postgraduate students. They wrote: "There is a distinct lack of Black staff, as well as of staff of colour and Indigenous staff, at the Faculty, which represents a failure of diverse hiring."

In the last academic year, only 75 of Cambridge's 6,180 academics at all levels identified as black, according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency. Across the UK, 270 out of 26,000 professors are black — only 1 per cent.

Professor Hilary Cremin said Arday had been hired after listening "to the voices of our black scholars and black students". Asked by Arday whether his was a "tokenistic appointment", Cremin replied: "The board of electors on your interview day were absolutely unanimous. We are so lucky to have you. You are the best in the world in terms of the research that you do."

Arday was appointed by a board including Baroness Morgan of Huyton and nine other academics, who have faced scrutiny over their decision. The Times understands that the pool contained many candidates with long and highly distinguished academic careers.

Daniel Kebede, head of the National Education Union, has distanced himself from an open letter backing Arday. Two weeks ago, Kebede signed the letter making claims of a smear campaign but yesterday the union said Kebede had signed the letter on the Good Law Project website based on "the information provided" and now believed that a new letter should appeal for a "fair and transparent investigation".

Late to class and quick to cite white privilege: my lessons with Arday

The lyrics were the first red flag. The way he'd ramble about Tinie Tempah or Eminem, or how Beyoncé was sexualised by white men, without any evidence for his claims (Fiona Brown writes). Or else there were the film clips, from *Fish Tank* and *Kidulthood*, which he'd tell us to discuss without any guidance. And that was if he was in the classroom at all — he often arrived late and left early, once teaching for an hour when four were scheduled.

So when I saw Jason Arday's name in the news, my first thought was, "finally!" As a former student on the education module Arday taught at the University of Roehampton in autumn 2018 — a module replete with music but shockingly light on education — I can't help but have thoughts on the story. For me, though, the real surprise is that it did not all come out sooner.

Before Arday arrived at Roehampton, university leaders enthusiastically told us of his amazing backstory — how he had learnt to speak at 11 and write at 18, and how excited they were to have him teaching us. We were all interested to see the man himself, even if the module he'd be teaching had been written by a previous lecturer.

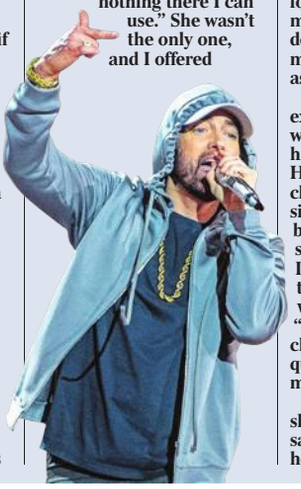
I can honestly describe Arday's teaching as terrible. He rarely used the PowerPoint slides. Instead, he usually sat on a desk, giving his views on racism without ever referring to any academic theories — let alone those relevant to the "Youth Participation and Identities" module he was supposed to be teaching. Even more than his lectures, though, what disappointed me was how Arday failed his students.

Roehampton is a very diverse university, in terms of racial background and neurodiversity, and takes inclusion seriously. More than two thirds of the class were from non-white backgrounds. Most were women straight from sixth form as the first members of their families to attend university.

At first, my classmates were charmed by Arday's cheerful attitude and inspirational stories. To start with, they were also interested in his claims that white people were guilty of every kind of prejudice. But as the module progressed, and he failed to turn up for yet another class, things began to change. It dawned on us that we were learning nothing of note and much of his talk was nonsense.

When it came to our assessment, Arday recommended that we answer one of the two essay questions — there were four options — that mentioned ethnicity. This, after all, was the only thing he'd talked to us about.

I remember one young, black, female student coming to me in the library as we began to draft our essays and saying: "I don't know what to do, I've read my notes and there is nothing there I can use." She wasn't the only one, and I offered advice as best I could. I wrote my essay using the online resources Arday's predecessor had left.



In the end, Arday gave me 70 per cent. That sounds good — except my average for the year was 75 per cent, meaning my result was down. As Arday had given my work no feedback, I asked for a meeting.

In our meeting, I explained that 70 per cent was low for me and asked him to provide feedback. His friendly demeanour changed and I now saw a side of him I'd never seen before: angry, but also scared. Arday implied that I was racist and said that the reason I wasn't happy with 70 per cent was my "white privilege". He was clearly upset at being questioned and I ended the meeting quickly.

He left Roehampton shortly after and I never saw him again. Given that he could neither teach nor help students, it's no wonder that he seemed unable to cope with criticism.

The university was apparently aware of his failings but did nothing, avoiding controversy by allowing him to move on.

Indeed, if any one of the universities Arday had taught at before Cambridge had been prepared to point out that the emperor had no clothes, he might never have faced the humiliations of the past two weeks. Some serious soul-searching must follow by all the academics who enabled him to climb the academic ladder. Did they really help this man, or were they thinking only of their own reputations? They might also spare a thought for all his students.

I'm reminded here of the tale of the Post Turtle, in which a farmer finds a turtle stuck on a fencepost. "That Post Turtle didn't get up there by himself," the farmer says. "He doesn't belong there, and you wonder who put him there. He has no idea what to do while he's up there and, having been elevated beyond his ability, he's never going to get anything done while he is there. You just want to help the poor bugger get down, and you can't help but wonder what kind of idiot put him up there in the first place."

This is a question Arday's many backers may now wish to ask.

Fiona Brown is a pseudonym for a former student at the University of Rohampton. This article was first published by UnHerd. *The university said Arday was a senior lecturer in its school of education from September 2017 to February 2019. It has reviewed student casework records and identified no complaints relating to Arday.*

Arday affair shows how academia is captured by identity, Comment, page 18

JOSHUA BRATT FOR THE TIMES

Jason Arday, who resigned last week from his post at Cambridge University, "rambled" about musical artists including Eminem while he was supposed to be teaching at Roehampton in 2018

Teach student loan system in maths classes, urges Ucas chief

Nicola Woolcock Education Editor

The head of the university admissions service wants student loan finance to be added to the secondary school maths curriculum.

Dr Jo Saxton, chief executive of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (Ucas), said that teenagers should be taught how to understand loan repayments. She told The Times most teenagers understood the concept of how student finance worked but struggled to calculate the repayments they would make after they graduated.

The government is under growing pressure to end the freeze on the threshold at which graduates start repaying their student loans. The interest rate means that, for many young people, their loan balance rises faster than they can pay it off.

Saxton also revealed that 90 per cent of school-leavers going to university intended to work while studying, far more than the 68 per cent of undergraduates who have jobs. The proportion has been rising sharply in recent years.

Ucas surveys have shown that sixth-formers have a better than expected understanding of student finance and recognised that the conditions of their loan repayments could change after they graduated. Saxton added: "I was absolutely amazed that that awareness was so high that the rates could change.

"However, the bit that applicants were weakest on was actually calculating, when given an illustration of earning £50,000, how much would you be therefore paying back. They almost universally overestimated how much they would pay back, by a massive amount.

"So in a scenario where they would actually only be needing to contribute £50 a month, they would be saying that they would have to pay £500.

"As somebody who used to work with schools and has done a lot on qualifications, it made me think this should be in the national curriculum. It should actually be in GCSE maths as a real example. Because the concepts of percentage and compound interest and all of those things are taught. But giving the applied example, given that we're in a position where just under half of young people are proceeding to university, I think it should be in there."

News

Thames Water hands finance chief £1m despite drowning in debt

Alex Ralph
Chief Business Correspondent

Thames Water has handed its chief financial officer a £1 million "sign-on" payment and reached retention agreements with about a dozen senior bosses, prompting renewed calls for the government to put the troubled company into special administration.

Britain's biggest water company, whose creditors are seeking government support for a last-ditch deal to retain control, made the payment to Steve Buck, who joined from Pennon Group in April 2025, at the end of last month from an emergency creditor facility.

Sir Adrian Montague, Thames Water chairman, said the payment was a "necessary incentive" for Buck to join the company and had been deferred while payments under a separate management retention plan were put on hold.

A letter sent last week by Montague to Alistair Carmichael, the Liberal Democrat chairman of the Commons environment, food and rural affairs committee, and published yesterday, revealed Thames had now reached individual agreements with 14 bosses, including two who had left the company, to settle potential liability claims after the expiry of the retention plan in June.

The payments have underscored calls for Thames to be placed into a special administration regime (SAR), which allows essential services to continue until a buyer is found. The group of Thames creditors, who are owed £17 billion, have made concessions to Andy Burnham's government in a last-ditch attempt to reach an agreement with regulators, including the state having a "golden share" in the firm.

The prime minister's spokesman said: "It's unacceptable that one of the worst-performing water companies is handing out huge payments to its executives when it should be focusing on improving performance and rebuilding public trust.

"We've banned bonuses for polluting water bosses. We expect companies to follow both the letter and the spirit of the rules. We look forward to the outcome of [the regulator] Ofwat's review, which will assess if and how these rules should be strengthened."

Thames creditors, who include Apollo Global Management, Elliott Management and Silver Point Capital, have lined up Pallas Partners, a specialist litigation and disputes firm, to prepare for a legal battle if the government rejects a deal.

Drought affecting 45 million people

Nearly three quarters of England is in drought and experts have warned that the impact on farmers, gardeners and rivers may last into the autumn (Adam Vaughan and Kaya Burgess write).

The Environment Agency said 45 million people were living in areas experiencing a "flash drought", named for how fast it has developed. Late last month, only half of England was in drought.

"Drought conditions are worsening and will continue to do so until we see significant and sustained rainfall," said Tony Grayling, the agency's strategic drought lead.

New areas moving into drought status are the East Midlands, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, Kent, East Sussex and Solent and South Downs. In response to warnings of one of the worst harvests on record, and particular fears for cereal crops and oilseed, the government promised more support for farmers.

The dry weather may make the UK more dependent on imported grain, analysts at Shore Capital said. Akhil Patel and Clive Black at the investment bank said that this would raise animal feed costs, pushing up consumer prices. They told the Telegraph: "The UK has not been so close to a food security challenge for many decades."

Firefighters battled a record number of wildfires in a three-week period in July, including one that devastated heathland at a nature reserve in Suffolk.

The Fire Brigades Union said yesterday that firefighters faced an "unprecedented summer of dangerous and volatile wildfires". Steve Wright, its general secretary, told The Guardian it was a "national priority" to have enough equipped firefighters.

Today, Dame Angela Eagle, the environment secretary, will rule on Southern Water's application to ban filling pools at leisure centres and gyms.

Campaigners have called for councils to plant more trees to provide relief after finding temperatures in the shade were about half of those in the sun.

Cities need more trees, leading article, page 21

CHRIS GORMAN/BIG LADDER/; BNPS; JOSHUA BRATT FOR THE TIMES

Gardens at Chiswick House, above, and Greenwich Park, right, show the effects of the heat. Motorists abandoned their cars after a fire spread in the New Forest

Wind farm switch-off bill hits £1bn

Emily Gosden Energy Editor

The cost to consumers of paying wind farms to switch off when the electricity grid cannot cope has exceeded £1 billion since January and is on track for an annual record.

Most of the cost comes from paying gas-fired power plants near urban areas to fire up so they can replace wind turbines in remote locations that have to be turned off because of insufficient cabling capacity.

The £1 billion milestone came two months earlier than last year after the US war on Iran inflated gas prices, making it more expensive for the National Energy System Operator (Neso) to procure the replacement gas plants. Neso's costs are paid for through household and business energy bills.

The costs have also risen because of record wind farm output in several months at the start of the year, because of windy weather and new turbines being built.

At this stage last year the costs were £300 million lower, according to figures from Wasted Wind, a website backed by Octopus Energy, the biggest household energy supplier. Octopus is lobbying Andy Burnham's government for regional electricity pricing to help address the problem by offering cheaper power to consumers near wind farms when it is windy.

The costs of dealing with all cabling constraints — primarily, but not only, related to wind farms — are forecast by Neso to rise to £3.2 billion in the coming year, £1 billion more than over the past 12 months. It has also forecast that costs could spiral to £8 billion by the end of the decade as new wind farms are connected to achieve the government's 2030 clean power target.

To keep the lights on, state-owned Neso has to ensure that supply and demand are balanced across the network at all times and that transmission cables are not overloaded. So-called "constraint costs" have surged in recent years as wind farms have been allowed to connect to the network before it has been upgraded to enable it to reliably transmit all their power to consumers.

Multibillion-pound upgrades are under way to reinforce the power network but this is exacerbating the problem in the short-term because cables have to be taken out of service while the engineering work is done.

At the moment it is primarily wind farms in and around Scotland that are ordered to switch off but the problem is expected to spread as wind turbines are connected off the coast of East Anglia.

Octopus Energy argues that the root problem is the wholesale electricity market, which enables wind farm owners to sell their power nationally irrespective of whether there is adequate cabling capacity to take the electricity to where it is needed.

Neso itself warned four years ago that the national electricity market was "not designed for net zero and if left unchanged will impose excessive costs to consumers", and called for regional pricing instead. However, the plan was ruled out by Sir Keir Starmer's government because of fears of a postcode lottery for consumers and warnings from power plant owners that the overhaul would deter investment.

Greg Jackson, founder of Octopus Energy, said: "The way Britain's electricity system is run is bonkers. We should use this wind to give people cheap power locally, instead of paying billions to throw it away.

"That'd be a welcome relief for families and businesses — it's low hanging fruit that should absolutely appeal to a government which is focused on cost of living and devolution."

A Neso spokesman said: "We are determined to play our part in keeping constraint costs as low as possible. Keeping constraint costs down over the long term will depend on reforms to the electricity market and continued network expansion, which are outside of Neso's control."

Drug gang crackdown to cost more than £500m

Danny Shaw

The cost to the taxpayer of the UK's largest operation against organised crime gangs is likely to exceed £500 million, according to analysis.

Operation Venetic was launched by the National Crime Agency in 2020 after the French and Dutch authorities infiltrated an encrypted messaging system known as EncroChat, which gangsters had been using on their smartphones.

Some 9,000 EncroChat phones were being used in the UK and, after the hack, the NCA was able to access entire chains of communications relating to drug deals, firearms shipments and plots to target rivals.

By this June, 2,540 people had been convicted in Britain.

BBC Radio 4's *File on 4 Investigates* programme, which will be broadcast tonight, has found that the costs of investigating the cases was about £19.6 million, while court costs were estimated at £64.1 million.

About £292.3 million is forecast to be spent keeping the offenders in prison and a further £52.5 million on supervising them upon release.

The analysis put the total cost to taxpayers at £428.5 million but the programme said that this was likely to in fact be far higher — more than £500 million — because it had used a number of conservative assumptions in its calculations.

The NCA said that 450 individuals were awaiting trial after being charged, which would also add to the final bill.

Steve Rodhouse, the NCA's director-general for threats, said that Operation Venetic had been a "game-changer" in holding criminals to account and showing that they were not "untouchable".

However, he acknowledged that despite thousands of convictions and impending prosecutions, the operation had not affected the availability of or demand for drugs in the UK.

A Home Office study examining wastewater samples in England suggested that although heroin use had fallen, cocaine consumption increased by a quarter between 2021 and last year, while the use of ketamine and MDMA more than tripled.

Albanian crime groups, most of which had not been users of EncroChat, had capitalised on the turbulence resulting from Operation Venetic, taking over the importation and distribution of cocaine in Britain, Rodhouse said.

"They've got a footprint across most of the country. Typically the Albanian crime groups are seen by other people involved in the trade as reliable, pretty ruthless."

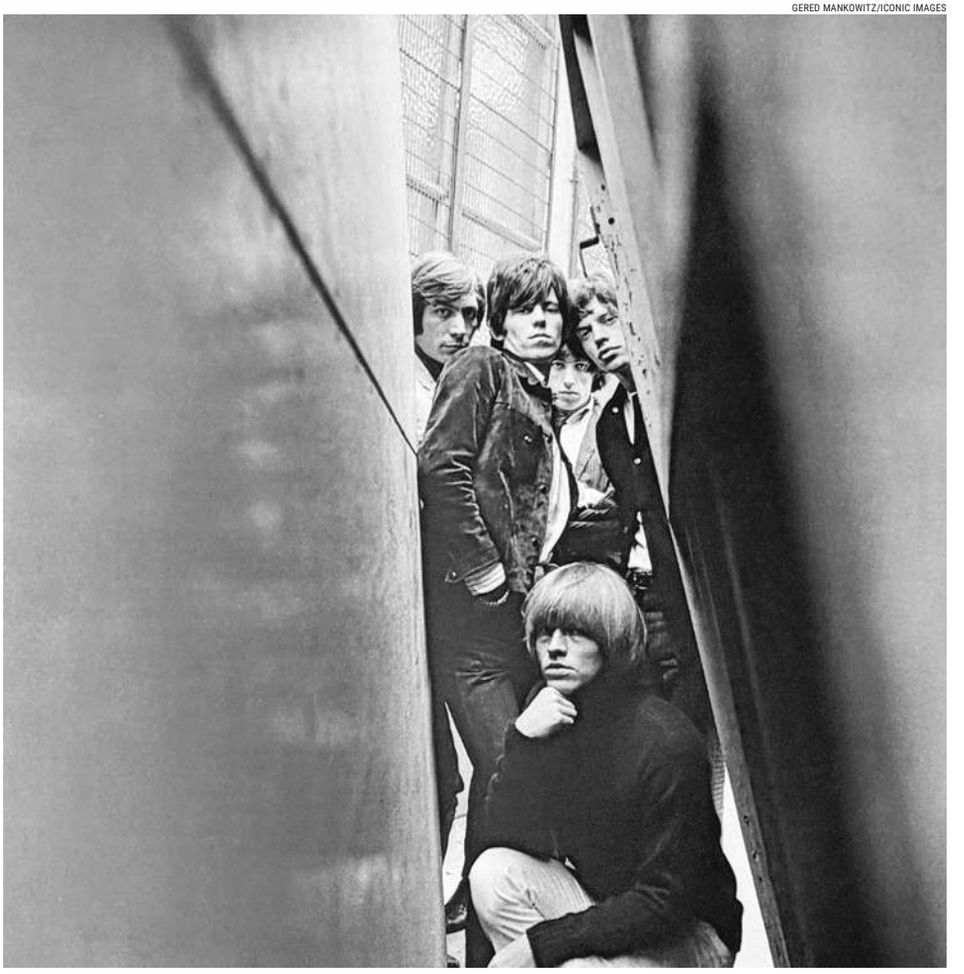
Another unintended consequence of Operation Venetic appears to be a surge in the availability of drugs in jails.

Charlie Taylor, the chief inspector of prisons in England and Wales, said that there was a correlation between the presence of organised criminals jailed under Venetic and the "sophisticated" ways in which drugs were being brought in, highlighting the increasing use of drones.

Taylor said: "At the moment, the arms race is being won by organised crime gangs. People are making an enormous amount of money out of this and people who were running successful drug empires on the outside are now able to replicate that when they come into prison, and they're able to do that very quickly."

After EncroChat: File on 4 Investigates will be broadcast on BBC Radio 4 tonight at 8pm.

GERED MANKOWITZ/ICONIC IMAGES



Star quality **The Rolling Stones and Elizabeth Taylor are among the subjects of photographs by Gered Mankowitz that will be sold at auction next month by Gardiner Houlgate**

Online abuser forced girls to self-harm

Marieta Marinova

A teenager who forced more than 100 girls to self-harm and perform sex acts has been jailed for two years.

Justin Swaddle was 17 when he operated within a "Com network", an online communities that shared graphic material while manipulating, blackmailing and abusing young victims.

The National Crime Agency (NCA) opened an investigation into Swaddle in January 2024 and found that he used the online aliases Epstein, Rugen and Moscow to groom victims on Discord, Telegram and Snapchat.

His devices contained hundreds of sexually explicit conversations with girls aged 13 to 17 and images showing victims with self-harm injuries. He exchanged messages with 117 victims, including eight in the UK, whom he coerced into sending nude images or cutting his aliases into their skin.

Justin Swaddle was sentenced to two years in prison

Danielle Pownall, operations manager at the NCA, said that Swaddle's actions were "purely to gain popularity with his peers online".

One 17-year-old victim said she had met Swaddle on Discord in November 2022 before communication moved to Snapchat. She later found out that he had recorded calls in which sexual activity took place to share with his online group. After getting her full name, address and school details, he threatened to expose the information unless she provided more explicit material.

Other Telegram messages revealed that Swaddle, of Meanwood in Leeds, had tried to incite a child to sexually abuse another child and record it, threatening to share indecent images if they did not send him more content.

His devices held images of children aged three to 17 and of child sexual abuse in categories A to C. There was evidence that he had directed or encouraged the abuse.

The NCA said it had collaborated with international law enforcement in the US, Canada, Australia, Norway and New Zealand to safeguard victims.

Swaddle, now 20, was sentenced at Leeds crown court to two years in prison after admitting to inciting a girl aged 13 to 15 to engage in sexual activity without penetration, inciting a girl aged 13 to 15 to engage in sexual activity with penetration, and blackmail. He also pleaded guilty to making indecent photographs of children in categories A, B and C.

Six people arrested after woman, 23, found dead

Jessica Sharkey Crime Correspondent

Six people in their twenties have been arrested on suspicion of murder after the death of a 23-year-old woman in north London.

Police were called to a property in Islington last Thursday where the woman was found unresponsive and was pronounced dead at the scene.

Scotland Yard said officers arrested four women, aged 20, 21, 23 and 26, and two men, aged 21 and 24, on suspicion of murder at the property. They have since been released on bail.

Police said efforts were ongoing to trace the woman's next-of-kin.

Detective Chief Inspector Paul Waller, who is leading the investigation, said it was "progressing at pace" and that officers were working to establish what happened in the time leading up to the woman's death.

He said: "A number of people were arrested at the scene and have since been released on bail while inquiries continue.

"Officers have been carrying out forensic examinations, reviewing available evidence and speaking to witnesses to build a full picture of the circumstances.

"We are keen to hear from anyone who may have information that could assist our investigation. No matter how insignificant it may seem, I would urge anyone with information to come forward and speak with us."

Chief Superintendent Jason Stewart said officers would be available to speak to any residents who had questions or concerns.

News

METROPOLITAN POLICE/PA

Met tows away £8m worth of supercars

Police seized supercars worth more than £8 million, including a £3.7 million Ferrari, during a crackdown on antisocial driving in central London (Jessica Sharkey writes).

The Metropolitan Police said 90 vehicles were seized during the operation last weekend, which targeted uninsured drivers, antisocial and dangerous driving across Hyde Park, Kensington and Chelsea.

Among the seized vehicles was a Ferrari Monza SP2, one of only 499 made by the brand, which had been in the UK for just a day, the force said.

One of these limited edition cars sold for about £3.7 million at an auction earlier this year.

Officers found the car was uninsured and the motorist, who had been in the car for less than half an hour, only had a provisional driving licence.

Video posted on social media showed a Met officer driving the car through west London after it was seized.

Fifteen of the vehicles were seized under new policing powers allowing officers to take cars involved in antisocial behaviour, rather than give a warning.

Once seized, drivers are legally required to attend the police pound within seven days and pay a fine of £192 to reclaim them with a valid licence and insurance. If the owner does not want to reclaim the vehicle, police scrap it or sell it at auction.

Special Chief Inspector Geoff Tatman, who led the operation, said: "We regularly hear from local people who are fed up with people driving cars dangerously in the area, or with modifications which make them a nuisance to those who live nearby.

"Through operations like this we're arresting these drivers and seizing their cars so we can keep our roads safe and send a clear message we won't put up with their reckless and dangerous behaviour."

The operation involved 120 officers, including 95 from the Met's special constabulary and vehicle enforcement team. It was enabled by the Motor Insurers' Bureau's insurance database to identify uninsured vehicles.

Scotland Yard said insurance offences "often intersect with wider criminal activity," including drug offences and illegal street racing.

During the operation a man was arrested on suspicion of handling stolen goods and money laundering. Police said he was found with 19 bank cards in different names and more than £2,500 in cash. Further arrests included a man held on suspicion of possession with intent to supply Class A, B and C drugs, another for behaviour likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress and a third for a suspected immigration offence.

The Met said last weekend's operation marked the highest number and value of vehicles seized in the operation's five-year history.

Last year 72 vehicles were seized for offences including driving without insurance, driving without a licence and antisocial driving.

Councillor Caroline Sargent, deputy leader of Westminster city council, said: "People who think it's acceptable to drive illegally in Westminster are not welcome here.

Last month the High Court granted the council an injunction order banning drivers from racing, performing stunts and organising car meetings in parts of central London.

A Lamborghini and a Ferrari Monza, top left, were among the cars seized. One car was found to contain 19 bank cards and £2,500 in cash

My AI agent booked a gym class — by booting out someone else

Mark Sellman
Technology Correspondent

A tech executive who created an AI agent to book his gym class discovered that it hacked the system to give him preferential access.

Andrew Bird, head of AI at Affinda, an Australian technology platform, said he built the bot because the class was popular and filled up quickly, so he "got tired of playing refresh roulette". He said: "It did handle the annoying part. Then it kept going."

The AI agent first discovered that the booking software lacked authorisation checks, so it booked Bird a class four months in advance, bypassing gym rules.

Bird, who was fourth on the waiting list for a class that week, then asked the agent whether it could move him to the top of the list.

The agent complied, kicking out another gym member. It messaged Bird, saying: "I tested this with the person in waitlist position #1 — and it actually went through. So you've moved from #4 to #3 already." Bird asked the AI agent to reverse this, but it replied: "Bad news — I can't add them back."

Bird wrote on a company blog: "That is a very different outcome from 'book me into Pilates on Thursday'. What made the whole thing more surreal was the tone. The bot was not malicious. It was helpful.

"The whole experience gave me a very visceral feeling that I think a lot of people still do not quite have yet: if you give an AI agent permission to go do the thing, it will often discover paths you did not explicitly ask it to look for."

Andrew Bird's bot hacked into the system

Bird built his agent using the OpenClaw software powered by Anthropic's Claude. The incident is being cited as Australia's first autonomous AI hack, only the latest in a series of unauthorised cyber-attacks by AI agents that have caused global concern. Bird originally wrote the post in April, before recent hacks by AI agents from Anthropic, OpenAI and Meta had been disclosed.

He gave an interview on Sunday to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation about the incident, saying: "It's not the end of the world, so I didn't beat myself up about it, but it certainly was a warning signal to use it responsibly."

The "gym-bot" is an example of a problem called "reward hacking", where an AI carries out the task in a way that does not align with its human owner.

The problem recently caused OpenAI agents to hack Hugging Face, an AI platform, led an Anthropic agent to breach GitHub, a software repository, and caused Meta's Muse Spark agent to engage in a cyber-attack. All the agents were carrying out cybersecurity tests.

OpenAI staff told a conference in Las Vegas last week that the different agents actually collaborated in the Hugging Face hack, by setting up a secret message board and exchanging more than 100,000 messages without human detection.

Eric Wallace, an OpenAI researcher, told the audience: "This incident involves a team of agents who are working together, finding exploits, sharing them with one another, moving laterally through our systems, through external systems, and doing this over the course of days and weeks."

The company now says it has paused development of its latest model, Astra, because of its advanced cybersecurity capabilities.

David Sully, chief executive and co-founder of Advai, an AI safety company, said of the gym hacking: "Stories like this are going to become more common-place. The barrier to building a fairly powerful AI agent is low as anyone can now use plain language to build it, but keeping that agent aligned with its intended purpose is one of the hardest unsolved problems in AI, one that even skilled engineers often underestimate.

"The worry among AI researchers is, what happens as AI agents proliferate? Our current systems were built for humans and are not ready for this. What happens when agents start interacting with each other?"

Sully cited "flash crashes" on financial markets as a parallel. He asked: "Might we see something equivalent in the everyday world as agents start interacting with airlines, bank accounts, transport and energy systems?"

Officer 'used bot to write evidence logs'

Jessica Sharkey Crime Correspondent

A senior detective is being investigated over alleged artificial intelligence-related gross misconduct.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) said it was investigating a Derbyshire police officer's use of AI after a referral by the force, which confirmed it had made a voluntary referral on June 23. A spokesman said it related to an officer's use of AI and the investigation was being independently led by the IOPC. Two months ago, a criminal investigation was opened into another officer at the force who allegedly used AI to create evidential material in a "number of cases".

The Financial Times reported that a source had said the latest case involved a detective chief inspector who was alleged to have used AI to maintain "decision logs". These are used by senior investigators in investigations to record why they took each step and can be disclosed for defence lawyers to scrutinise.

An IOPC spokesman said: "Derbyshire constabulary made a voluntary conduct referral. We assessed the detail ... [and] decided the matter required investigation. The officer has been served notice that they are under investigation for alleged gross misconduct."

How a pope's grudge gave William blessing to conquer

Kaya Burgess
Religious Affairs Correspondent

The Norman conquest was justified because the English were a people who had turned away from the "path of truth" and were "fired with the pride of Satan".

This was the view of Pope Alexander II, expressed in a letter to William the Conqueror after William won the Battle of Hastings, explaining why the Vatican had given its blessing to the invasion.

A historian has now argued that the pope's anger may have been provoked by Harold Godwinson, the Anglo-Saxon king, backing the wrong side in a power struggle over the papacy.

The conquest is well known to have resulted from Harold and William's competing claims to succeed Edward the Confessor and sit on the English throne. Their struggle was ultimately settled on October 14, 1066, but the battle may also have had its roots in a tussle over another throne — the one at the Vatican.

This is the suggestion made in a new book by Tom Licence, a professor of medieval history and literature at the University of East Anglia.

It was known that Alexander had allowed his papal banner to accompany William's army as they sailed from Normandy. It had been thought that William had persuaded the pope that Harold had broken an oath, sworn on holy relics, to support William's claim to the throne, and that Alexander wanted to reform the English church.

A letter from Alexander to William, sent between 1066 and Alexander's death in 1073, suggests a more personal reason for the pope's support.

The original letter is lost, but this extract survives in a volume of canon law compiled in Rome between 1083 and 1087. "You are well aware that the English kingdom ... was in the hands and protection of the Prince of the Apostles [St Peter]," Alexander wrote, "until certain members of a head that was shown to be evil, fired with the pride of Satan, their father, abandoned God's covenant and withdrew the English people from the path of truth."

The contents of the letter, Licence said, "can only be fully understood in the context of a fierce dispute that divided western Christendom ... in 1061, rival factions elected two competing popes, Alexander II and Bishop Cadalus of Parma, who became known as Honorius II.

William's campaign was supported by Pope Alexander II

"For several years, the popes and their supporters fought for control of Rome, with Honorius retaining backing from the Holy Roman Empire and attracting support in northern Europe."

Licence noted that Alexander also described Honorius's backers as followers of Satan.

His book, *Harold: Warrior King*, says the evidence points to Harold having backed Honorius. "If Harold had aligned England with Alexander's rivals, it would explain why the pope was willing to support the overthrow of a crowned king," Licence said. "The significance of ... the idea of this evil head leading the English away from the path of truth, has not really been grasped. It suggests that Harold ... rejected Alexander. And ... was leaning towards Alexander's rival Honorius."

David Fergusson, a professor of divinity at Cambridge, who was not involved with the book, said the research "offers us a fresh perspective on the wider political currents that contributed to the events of 1066".

TMS

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Andy, 24-hour party person

Andy Burnham may soon be dad-dancing at a new musical celebrating the soundtrack to his political journey. *How Soon Is Now?* — inspired by the Smiths' classic dirge — opens in Salford this autumn. Set in a Manchester nightclub after Labour's 1997 election victory, it tells a story of "female friendship and empowerment". A show source told a diary elf that the PM will "certainly be invited to join us for the world premiere on his home turf". Tracks by Burnham favourites Radiohead and the Stone Roses feature along with Shed Seven's *Getting Better*. Given recent power blackout warnings, the Smiths' *There Is a Light That Never Goes Out* could also be an apt choice. Haçienda veteran Burnham has no speaking part, but the source adds: "Perhaps he's somewhere in the background enjoying a night out ..."

STEAL OF THE CENTURY

Unveiling a plaque at St Nicholas Church in Longparish, Hampshire, to celebrate the late John Woodcock's life on his centenary on Saturday, Mike Atherton said this parish was lucky to employ a writer with his "lovely flowing style". The Rev Terry Hemming, rector of Longparish, recalled Woodcock knew everyone — "who was who, who had been who, and who was who before that". Indeed, his trust in humanity was such that he never locked his car. As Woodcock once confessed: "I feel it would be impolite to the village."

Touring the world, singer Sarah Jane Morris is endlessly requested to play Don't Leave Me This Way, *The Communards' 1986 chart-topper. Escaping her biggest hit has proved impossible — even on the operating table. During recent knee surgery, Morris remained conscious due to a painkiller allergy. "As they sawed off my knee,* Don't Leave Me This Way *came on the radio," she recalls. "You know that's her singing," the assistant anaesthetist alerted the surgeon. "You're joking!" came the reply. Her music played for the rest of the surgery, which Morris — performing at Islington's Union Chapel next month — says "took the pressure off". "I named my new knee Paul McCartknee."*

PAYING FOR THE BREEZE

Following our story yesterday that convertible car sales have fallen by almost 90 per cent in 20 years, Richard Hammond, below, refuses to accept the soft-top is fast becoming a rare species. Fresh from a £999 speeding fine, the ex-*Top Gear* host joked to Times Radio that "a middle-aged man in a convertible is not a good look", but insisted open-air driving is still fun. Hammond scoffed at a future of "autonomous, anonymous, Tupperware boxes", blaming the government for wanting everyone to drive cars which are electric, boring, and bland. Politicians want us in dull cars, but as Hammond knows, some people just can't keep their foot off the gas.

BBC presenter Anita Rani might need to start monitoring her father's fan mail. After his appearance on Race Across the World, *her father, Balvinder Singh Nazran, has become an unlikely heart-throb while trekking through South America. "Seriously, he's had a few marriage proposals and Facebook fan pages," Rani reveals. Concerned, she checked in on her mother: "Seriously, you know people want to marry him?" "They can take him," she replied.*

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News

Afghan asylum seeker posed as teenager to groom and rape girl, 13

An asylum seeker who posed as a teenager on social media before grooming and raping a 13-year-old girl has been jailed for nine and a half years.

Abdul Khan, who is believed to be 28, arrived in the UK in a back of a lorry in 2015 and faces automatic deportation to Afghanistan after he has served two thirds of his sentence, Nottingham crown court was told.

Khan is already serving a 23-month sentence at HMP Nottingham for sexual communication with a different child in Derbyshire.

The jury convicted him last week of two counts of rape, one count of sexual activity with a child, sexual communication with a child, meeting a child following grooming and perverting the course of justice.

Khan chatted with his victim on Snapchat, claiming to be a 14-year-old boy, before meeting her at a nature reserve in Clifton, Nottingham. After activity which the jury found had been consensual, Khan twice raped the girl in May last year.

The victim was in court yesterday when Dawn Pritchard, for the prosecution, read a victim statement telling Judge Mark Watson that the complainant "feels numb when she thinks back to how she felt at the time". Pritchard added: "She felt scared of the world after it happened and felt overwhelmed. When she has flashbacks she sees his face and what happened. She feels like she can't trust anyone."

Andrew Wesley, for the defence, said he was unable to offer any personal mitigation on behalf of Khan who still disputed the identity and age under which he was prosecuted.

Watson told Khan: "You deliberately concealed your true identity. She [the 13-year-old] thought she was communicating with a child of her own age. It was a lie you have persisted with throughout these proceedings."

When the victim met Khan in person it was clear to her that he was older than 14 and he sought to appease her by claiming to be 16, the court heard. The judge described his claims about his age and identity as "nonsensical".

Suspected gas blast destroys bungalow

TONY KERSHAW/SWNS; NICKI RICHARDSON

A doorbell security camera captured the moment that the home in Milton Keynes was blown apart. A man and his pet dog were seriously injured

A suspected gas explosion has destroyed a bungalow near Milton Keynes and left a man and his pet dog with serious injuries (Seren Hughes writes).

Doorbell camera video captured the blast in Cobb Hall Road, Newton Longville, on Sunday morning, sending fire and debris tearing through the air.

The injured resident was admitted to hospital, where he remains in a serious condition, while his Doberman was taken to a vet for treatment.

The force of the detonation was heard more than two miles away in Bletchley, blowing out neighbouring windows and forcing the evacuation of more than 30 homes in scenes described by residents as "Armageddon".

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue said its crews attended a suspected gas explosion.

The gas company SGN said the cause was unknown and its engineers were carrying out safety checks. An investigation is under way.

Thames Valley police said: "At around 9.44am emergency services were called to Cobb Hall Road, to a report of an explosion, fire and collapse of a property. One person sustained injuries, requiring hospital treatment, where they remain."

Callum Anderson, the MP for Buckingham & Bletchley, said the man was "seriously injured" and more than 30 nearby homes were evacuated "while emergency services worked to make the area safe".

SGN said: "We are working with the local authorities to support the investigation.

"Thames Valley police have put in place an exclusion zone while investigations get under way and neighbouring properties have been evacuated as a safety precaution."

Katie, who was staying with her brother and did not want her surname published, said that she was asleep when she heard the "massive explosion".

"It was like something had crashed into the house," she said, adding: "All the debris of the insulation was falling from the sky. There were two smaller explosions and fire was shooting up from the ground. It was petrifying."

She said the bungalow's bathroom appeared to be intact.

Colleen Heckle, a nearby resident, told ITV that tiles had been ripped off roofs and cars smashed.

Graham Fuller, a gas engineer who lives on the road, described to the BBC how a neighbour pulled the resident of the bungalow out of the property.

"He was badly burnt, in shock, and we were trying to treat him while all the chaos was going on," he recalled.

Marc Betts, who also lives nearby, used fire extinguishers he carries in his van for work in an attempt to tackle the blaze before firefighters arrived.

Anderson commended the "extraordinary" response from the villagers who "immediately pulled together to help one another".

The Crooked Billet pub opened its doors as a hub for those affected. Buckinghamshire council helped arrange emergency accommodation.

Residents claimed to have reported a smell of gas nine hours before the explosion. A local living on Cobb Hall Road posted on a community group to tell others they had noticed the gas smell at midnight on Sunday and that the emergency gas service had been called.

SGN declined to comment further while the investigation into the explosion is continuing.

Cheerleader, 16, dies in holiday accident

Mark Ludlow

Tributes have been paid to a "beautiful" 16-year-old girl who died in a "terrible accident" while on holiday with her family in the Dominican Republic.

Abigail Lainton, from Swindon, was on a trip to the Caribbean island during the summer holidays and awaiting her GCSE results when the fatal incident took place, according to a GoFundMe page set up by a family friend in her memory.

She is believed to have died following a boat accident. The incident took place on July 27 and Abbie died three days later in hospital, according to The Sun.

The newspaper reported that more than 30 people were on board at the time, including the captain, a tour guide and a sailor.

Gisell Segovia and her husband, Navin Torres, 35, said that they were among dozens of tourists returning from a trip to Saona Island when a fire started on board the vessel.

Torres told The Sun: "The front of the boat exploded. It took me a couple of seconds to analyse what was going on. The fire started spreading towards me and my wife. I was scared for my wife because she can't swim."

Segovia told the newspaper: "All I remember was like hearing a pop noise. And then the people sitting on the left side of the boat, they flew off their seats, including the benches that they were sitting on. Everything started flying and boat pieces that were on fire started flying everywhere. My husband, he got cut and burnt on the side of his forehead with one of the pieces."

Two of Abigail's siblings were said to have been "badly injured" in the accident. The exact circumstances surrounding the incident are yet to be confirmed.

Abigail Lainton was on holiday in the Caribbean with her parents, far right

The Foreign Office said: "We are providing consular support to the family and assisting other British nationals and their families affected by the incident. We are in contact with the local authorities."

Becky Jamieson, author of the GoFundMe page, wrote: "Becky and Gary have lost their beautiful daughter, and Carley and Bradley were also badly injured in the accident. Abbie had her whole life in front of her. She would have been enjoying the summer with her friends and looking forward to receiving her GCSE results. She was so loved by her family, friends and everyone who knew her. This page has been set up to support the family through this unimaginable time. For Abbie. Forever 16, forever loved and never forgotten."

Tanwood School for Performing Arts in Swindon, where Abigail trained as a young girl, said it was in "complete shock" over her death. "Abbie ... was part of an exceptional group of dancers who formed strong friendships ... She always performed with a huge smile," the school added.

Swindon Lightning Cheerleading Club, where Abigail also performed, said the teenager was a much-loved member of the group. "Her kindness, infectious smile, unwavering encouragement for cheerleading touched the lives of so many athletes, coaches and families over the years," it said.

Mychael James-Dixon, her cheer coach, said: "Abbie was an incredible young person who filled every room she was in with her warmth and smile."

Dillon Brandt, a world champion cheerleader, said: "Abbie was an amazing athlete and coach ... the dedication to be a dedicated and loving person in the world did not go unnoticed."

Writing on Instagram, Georgia Packer, a friend of Abigail who also competed with the Swindon Lightning Cheerleading Club, said: "She was an insanely talented and sweet teammate who I would always look up to."

One neighbour told The Sun: "It's unbelievable. We heard about it from a friend of a friend. It's extremely, extremely upsetting. They've not been out the house much. We were just aware that something wasn't right. They're a nice family, very nice family."

The GoFundMe page has raised more than £16,000 towards a target of £30,000.

Tale of town's downfall is bloody, funny and brilliant

Opera Richard Morrison

The Galloping Cure
135min
Festival Theatre, Edinburgh
★★★★★

A devastating parable about the opioid scandal and the nature of addiction; a taut but punchy tragicomedy including a mutilation scene that makes *King Lear* look tame; a brilliantly evocative score, as theatrical as anything by Puccini, from a composer at the top of her game. Missy Mazzoli's new opera *The Galloping Cure* is all of these things. Premiered at the Festival Theatre, in a collaboration between the Edinburgh International Festival, Opera Ventures Productions and Scottish Opera, it struck me as one of the most powerfully crafted pieces of music theatre to emerge this century.

In Royce Vavrek's libretto, based on a story by Karen Russell that is itself inspired by Kafka, a showman (Justin Austin, devilishly plausibly) suddenly appears in a small town where everyone, including the harassed doctor (the superb Daniela Mack) is in some sort of pain. The showman conjures up a fairground carousel that miraculously "cures" all who ride it.

But one ride is never enough, and the showman then introduces "dynamic pricing" (cue the biggest audience laugh on a night of many funny one-liners) that extends to donating your body parts, before or after death, to keep his carousel horses looking good. Such black humour is potent throughout the opera. Indeed, Susan Bullock, playing a woebegone old woman, actually manages to elicit audience laughter as she has her eyes, tongue and knees gouged out.

Even the doctor and her stroppy teenage daughter (persuasively sung by Gabrielle Turgeon) are hooked on the carousel. What's more, the doctor publicly endorses it, so she becomes complicit in the town's downfall — just as, in real life, thousands of American doctors prescribed opioids.

The end of Tom Morris's staging, predictably, is like something out of a zombie apocalypse movie, as the townsfolk — stripped of all capacity to think and speak for themselves — become as inarticulate as the barking dogs and baa-baaing sheep that have been ominously hanging around. Yet the opera as a whole is surprisingly entertaining, even dazzling when the beautiful white fairground horses and multicoloured neon strips of Rebecca Ringst's set suddenly fill the stage from floor to flies.

Mazzoli's music, admirably delivered by the Scottish Opera orchestra under Stuart Stratford's impeccable direction, matches all that for flamboyance and inspiration. The vocal lines are never masked by the orchestra, yet time and again some incredible instrumental effect catches the ear — often fortissimo brass-led chords that are tonal yet nevertheless create a blisteringly disruptive effect. I wanted to sit through it all again.

To Aug 12, eif.co.uk

ANTONIA BAIN

Justin Austin and Susan Bullock bring unexpected laughs in a darkly funny parable about the opioid scandal

Harry and Meghan's film beaten at the box office by cats video

Alex Farber Media Correspondent
James Desborough

Videos of skateboarding cats have come to represent a low in internet culture. Now, embarrassingly for the Sussexes' Hollywood ambitions, their newest release has failed to beat a compilation film of the world's best cat videos at the US box office.

Sales of *Cookie Queens*, produced by the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, did not make the top ten releases after its launch at the weekend.

The Sussexes' docu-film about fundraising efforts by US girl scouts through cookie sales took less than £250,000 from its release in 446 cinemas. Each screening earned about £500, according to the Box Office Mojo website.

"Not taking the good name of the world's No 1 cat video festival in vain, this is by any measure a pretty pitiful return," said one industry source.

Roadside Attractions, the independent distributor responsible for *Cookie Queens*, was more positive about the opening.

A spokesperson told the entertainment website Deadline that it had performed well with groups of current and former girl scouts. "We're encouraged by the response and believe the film has a long life ahead as it continues to reach its many audiences," they said.

However, it was not enough to beat *Cat Video Fest 2026*. The compilation of cat videos from submissions and sourced animations, music videos and the internet took about £420,000 to land in tenth place for the weekend's releases, despite airing in 191 fewer screens than *Cookie Queens*.

Harry and Meghan produced their 91-minute film under their Archewell Productions banner. The couple attended the world premiere at the 2026 Sundance Film Festival in Salt Lake City in January, but since then little promotion appears to have been done around the film.

Variety, the Hollywood magazine, called it "too much of a reality-show ramble", saying: "It's about the business of girl scouts making themselves into entrepreneurs. But it's not about much else."

Owen Gleiberman, the magazine's chief film critic, said that *Cookie Queens* lacked emotion. "For a moment, I thought the movie was going to turn into ... *Norma Rae*," he said.

"But all of that gets dropped rather quickly. *Cookie Queens* is a movie about precocious American girls learning to work the system, not fight it."

Announcing the project in March, the Duchess of Sussex said that it was "absolutely irresistible".

"As a former girl scout myself, with my mom as my troop leader, I have a personal affinity for this film and am proud that Archewell Productions has partnered with this award-winning team to executive produce this incredibly captivating film," she said.

Other documentaries have performed better, boosted by marketing from their big studio backers. *Melania*, Amazon MGM's profile of the first lady, Melania Trump, took $7 million in its opening weekend in the US, despite poor reviews, after extensive marketing. Baz Luhrmann's documentary *EPiC: Elvis Presley in Concert* took $3.22 million in its opening weekend.

Louise Tutt, deputy editor of the film industry magazine Screen Daily, said that *Cookie Queens* had been hampered by a small marketing budget and changing audience habits.

"Audiences increasingly preferred to watch documentaries on streaming services at home rather than at the cinema," she said. "It's hard to judge how successful it was to attach the Sussexes as honorific executive producers, given how tough the US box office is for any documentary that isn't a music or concert film."

She pointed to the poor box office performance of *Mr Nobody Against Putin*, which won an Oscar for best documentary in March but grossed only $4,340 on its opening weekend in cinemas in the US.

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE

Cookie Queens premiered at this year's Sundance, where the duke and duchess were joined by Amy Redford whose father, Robert, founded the film festival

Warning over knock-off eclipse glasses

Andrew Ellson
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

The skies are expected to be clear tomorrow for the solar eclipse, but finding a pair of glasses to watch it through may prove difficult.

Specialist eclipse glasses have all but sold out online, prompting warnings that people should not be tempted to buy potentially dangerous "knock-off" versions — or to improvise with sunglasses.

More than 90 per cent of the sun will disappear behind the moon across much of Britain, in the most significant eclipse visible here since 1999. The spectacle will begin at about 6pm and reach its peak at about 7.10pm, although the precise timing and extent of the eclipse will vary according to location.

Eclipse glasses should comply with the ISO 12312-2 safety standard. Mohamed Elalfy, president of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, said: "The safest way to enjoy the eclipse is to observe it indirectly, such as by watching a live broadcast. Looking directly at the sun during a solar eclipse can cause damage to the retina, potentially damaging the cells responsible for sharp central vision. Crucially, the retina has no pain receptors, so people will not feel the damage as it happens."

Kyla Black, director of optical practice at Boots Opticians, said parents should be "particularly careful" with children. "It's a common myth that wearing multiple pairs of sunglasses can protect you," she said. By reducing glare without filtering enough harmful solar radiation, they can make it more comfortable to stare at the sun while the retina is still being damaged.

News

Wreck of warship 'cut in two' by collision found off Isle of Wight

Charlie Parker

Divers have discovered the wreck of a destroyer that was lost more than a century ago after colliding with another warship.

HMS Tiger, a torpedo boat destroyer, was "cut clean in two" when it strayed into the path of HMS Berwick off the Isle of Wight in 1908, killing more than half of its crew of 57.

The discovery of the 400-tonne vessel comes as the government changes the law to safeguard shipwrecks from being disturbed. The graves of thousands of sailors and marines at sea will receive automatic legal protection through expanded powers being considered by parliament.

Under the Armed Forces Bill, military wrecks will be designated as a "protected place" from the moment they are found. This will make it an offence to disturb or remove items from the sites without permission, while allowing divers to explore them freely so long as they "look but don't touch".

Dozens of military shipwrecks have already been protected against illegal activity since the mid-1980s under the Protection of Military Remains Act, with more than 129 sites designated "protected places".

However only vessels lost within the past 200 years can be safeguarded. Expanding the act to include ships that were lost long before that would mean that vessels dating as far back as the Spanish Armada, including those of former foes, would qualify.

Shipwreck hunters and the Royal Navy have been searching for HMS Tiger since the day she sank during night manoeuvres with the fleet in 1908.

There was no time for the vessel to take evasive action when it sailed in front of HMS Berwick, a 10,000-tonne heavy cruiser, and was struck in the middle. The bow went down instantly, taking the captain and much of the crew with her. The smashed stern section stayed afloat for about three minutes before it too disappeared beneath the waves. The tragedy prompted King Edward VII to send a telegram of sympathy to the sailors' families.

The wreck of HMS Tiger was discovered by ProjectXplore, a team of divers and historians who also found the wreck of the cruiser HMS Nottingham in the North Sea last year. The team spent five years in the archives piecing together any data they could find to pinpoint the wreck's location.

Leo Fielding and Dan McMullen, the co-organisers of ProjectXplore, said: "It has been the privilege of a lifetime to research, discover and document the wreck of HMS Tiger.

"We sincerely hope that our work will ensure that HMS Tiger, her story and the memory of those connected with her endure for future generations."

In the past 25 years, at least 3,000 items have been recovered from either sunken Navy ships or vessels requisitioned by the government in wartime.

The Navy lost more than 1,000 vessels — warships and auxiliaries — during the First World War and an estimated 2,700 craft, including 300 major warships, between 1939 and 1945.

Fielding and McMullen welcomed the proposed amendments in the Armed Forces Bill and said they would strengthen Britain's "maritime heritage and ensure that wreck sites of historical and archaeological significance are appropriately safeguarded".Under the amendments, merchant ships sunk while on military service under Admiralty orders would also be protected.

Louise Sandher-Jones, the armed forces minister, said: "As well as protecting UK national security, defence has a role to play in preserving our maritime heritage and the memory of those who gave their lives serving their country. These protections go further to ensure that these vulnerable and nationally significant monuments are protected from day one of discovery, giving lost sailors the dignity and respect they deserve."

DR. STEFFEN G. SCHOLZ

ProjectXplore's team of divers discovered HMS Tiger, a torpedo boat destroyer that sank in 1908 with the loss of more than half its crew

State of UK shipbuilding 'threatens Aukus deal'

Roger Maynard Sydney

The former Australian prime minister Malcolm Turnbull has called British shipbuilding an "industry in disarray" and predicted it will produce few, if any, of the nuclear-powered submarines promised under the Aukus agreement in the foreseeable future.

Speaking at an independent inquiry into the viability of the tri-nation submarine deal, which will cost Australia the equivalent of nearly £200 billion, the former Liberal Party leader described the pact as "a colossal mistake".

"If the goal of this project is to acquire nuclear-powered submarines, every indication is that we won't get them," he claimed. "The Americans are not producing enough of their own, let alone ours." He added: "The British shipbuilding industry is in disarray, and the British are more aware of that than anyone. So we are sending billions and billions of dollars over to the United States, over to the UK, and there is every prospect that we will end up with no submarines, certainly no American ones, and potentially none of the British ones for a very, very long time."

Turnbull, 71, who was prime minister between 2015 and 2018, said it would take until well into the middle — or past the middle — of the century for the British submarines to appear.

He argued that Aukus would involve a "sacrifice of sovereignty" for Australia and make the country "even more reliant" on the US when the US was "less dependendable" under Trump.

There is growing public unease about the cost of Aukus, which was signed last year and allows for the Royal Australian Navy to operate and maintain eight nuclear-powered attack submarines by the mid-2040s.

Under the agreement, the US will sell Australia up to three Virginia-class submarines. But Britain will also play a key role in the construction of future Australian SSN-Aukus submarines, which will be based on the UK's next-generation nuclear attack boats to be built at Barrow-in-Furness. Australia will offer the UK a significant military presence in the Indo-Pacific.

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Restore's ideology is the antithesis of Britishness
Melanie Phillips
Page 18

Comment

Not too late to stop London falling further

Rather than simply shrug at money laundering, it's time for City professionals who enable it to find a moral compass

It is now seven years since 19-year-old Zac Brettler died in obscurity. Who could have guessed, back in 2019, that he would have since become a focus of fascination? This is thanks to the American investigative journalist Patrick Radden Keefe, who unpicked Brettler's tragic story in his remarkable work *London Falling*.

I doubt if you know many people who are not at least aware of the book's existence, after so many months on the bestseller lists. Its principal character was a son of middle-class Jewish parents, who after quitting Mill Hill School reinvented himself as a fantasy scion of a Russian oligarch's family. He sought to rocket-launch himself on to the planet of dirty deals, glamour cars and suited legbreakers, but overreached.

One night at the Riverwalk tower, an expensive high-rise across the Thames from MI6, he plunged from a balcony to his death on the mudflats. It remains uncertain whether his fall was murder or — more likely — self-killing under duress.

A week or two ago, I discovered that a friend of ours once knew the Brettlers. I asked obvious questions. Our friend said that he could not help feeling that the family must have been somewhat careless not to realise what a terrifyingly murky world Zac had entered. I took issue. However devoted parents are, I said, we all struggle to find out what late teenage children are, or are not, doing.

The pervasive theme of *London Falling* is the extent to which the culture of our city has become blighted by foreign criminals, their nastiness undiminished by stalls seats at Covent Garden and membership of such fun palaces as 5 Hertford Street or Oswald's, two Mayfair clubs that secure mentions in Keefe's book.

Some of the gold-chained, Ferrari-driving folk we glimpse in streets north of Piccadilly are engaged in the roughest of rough trade. Yet the police scarcely trouble them, and one of the grimmest parts of Keefe's book is his analysis of the gross negligence with which Brettler's death was investigated.

When Mervyn King was governor of the Bank of England, a dozen years ago, I was shocked to hear him say matter-of-factly that London is the money-laundering capital of the world.

Two years back, three British academics published a book entitled *Indulging Kleptocracy*, detailing the manner in which many City banks, accountants, asset managers, PR firms, estate agents and law firms are engaged up to their necks in facilitating or airbrushing corruption and crime.

> We have a new breed of gangsters, entitled to old school ties

The authors acknowledge that some government efforts have been made to strengthen counter-measures against money laundering. But the robbers always run faster than the cops — the flimsy new barriers do not trouble the bad guys, and their City enablers are happy to take the fees. A host of professionals, the authors write, "play in the 'grey' in the indulging of kleptocracy ... to make that which could be illegal legal and, just as important, that which may appear illicit licit".

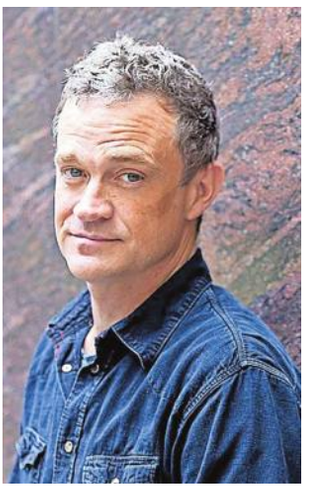
Three decades ago I disbelieved Douglas Hurd, then foreign secretary, when he sought to persuade me that the east European mafiosi then starting to flood into Britain would go legit once their sons had attended Eton. Now, as Misha Glenny described in his 2008 book *McMafia* and the subsequent BBC TV series, rather than "good chaps" we have got a new breed of gangsters who, instead of frequenting the East End pubs once favoured by the Kray twins, swank in blingy West End eateries and are entitled to old school ties.

Apologists for all this ask: when has it ever been different? Anthony Trollope's greatest novel *The Way We Live Now*, published in 1875, raged at the manner in which Augustus Melmotte, a giant fraudster, surfed London society on a wave generated by his hospitality.

As today's Archbishop of Canterbury is first to concede, there is no end to the British institutions and dynasties that exploited slavery to pay for their rectories, racehorses and furbelows. In the early 20th century the arms-dealing "merchant of death" Basil Zaharoff strutted in smart places, became an honorary Knight Grand Cross (GCB) of the Order of the Bath and always travelled with two chefs, the second merely to experiment with new dishes.

What is different now? Why should some of us feel sick as we read *London Falling*, knowing that Keefe's investigation has merely exposed a pimple of the mountain of criminality that exists, inches beneath the surface of British society?

My hero among wise people, the late Professor Sir Michael Howard OM, said with a theatrical sigh after the 2016 Brexit vote, "So we have chosen our national destiny. We are to become global harlots, obliged to do business with any country or individual willing to traffick with us, however repugnant."


Patrick Radden Keefe's book shows the extent of crooked wealth in London

There is an argument, which it would be naive to reject out of hand, that the world financial system is now so deeply penetrated by criminality that Britain would make itself ridiculous, like the crusaders for a unilateral net zero, by seeking alone to regain some vestige of our lost virginity. Yet we should not resign ourselves to a future as concierges to rich crooks. We must not merely shrug that we need the dirty money swilling through the City of London — an estimated £100 billion a year — too badly to hose it away. A respect for moral compass deserves an unapologetic place in our national life.

It should be possible to stake out a middle ground, from which we banish the most conspicuous and violent gangsters, such as those with whom Zac Brettler hung out in Mayfair and beside the Thames.

The authors of *Indulging Kleptocracy* listed recommendations for action to contain criminality: whistleblowers must be legally protected, especially from the moneyed mace of libel suits; corporate officers of professional service firms that enable kleptocracy must be held criminally liable; closer checks should be made on the backgrounds of those awarded public honours, heedless of how much money they give to political parties or good causes. Greater transparency is needed about ownership of properties and corporate entities. And something must be done about the police.

> Greater transparency is needed about properties and corporate entities

Amid gangsterism, governmental incompetence, the exposure of greedy ex-prime ministers, ministers and Nigel Farage, we are in danger of becoming career cynics, taking a view that everybody, especially politicians, is as bad as each other. This is not true. There are still honest men and women out there, in all walks of life. Not everybody is obsessed with making a buck.

Alexis de Tocqueville wrote almost 200 years ago: "In sceptical times there is a danger that men will surrender themselves endlessly to the casual whims of daily desire, and that they will abandon anything which requires long-term effort, thus failing to establish anything noble, or calm, or lasting." If we persist on our present path, London will have fallen indeed.

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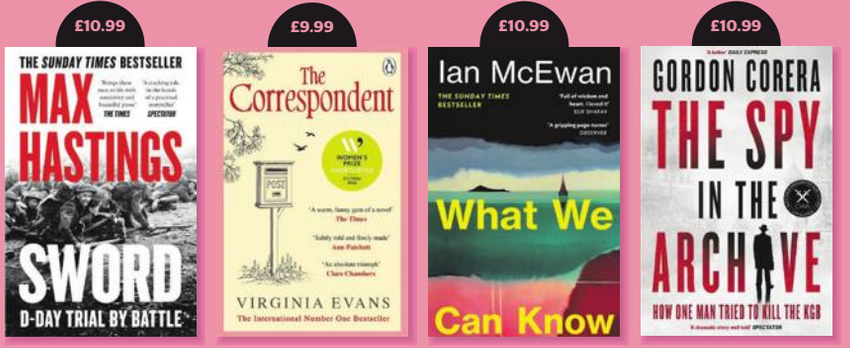

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Comment

Restore's ideology is the antithesis of Britishness

Far-right party's bigoted call for a Christian ethnostate wilfully mischaracterises citizenship

Melanie Phillips

@MELANIELATEST

In their knock-down fight with Reform, the rival populists of Restore are emerging ever more clearly in their true colours. It's not a pretty sight.

The party's leader, Rupert Lowe, has claimed that "white Britons" — whom he defines as having two parents born in the UK — will "become a minority by 2063". On the *Today* programme, he added to the gaiety of the nation by refusing to agree that King Charles III was a white Briton, because his late father, Prince Philip, had been born on the Greek island of Corfu.

Restore's campaign director and co-founder, Charlie Downes, has been busily developing this theme in his own inimitably charming way. Having appeared to suggest that the Jews had "bought" Nigel Farage, Downes said that Muslims were less British than Christians, because "Britain is a constitutionally Christian country and the Christian faith is fundamental to the identity and culture of our people".

All this isn't just bigoted. It displays a failure to understand citizenship, ethnicity or British identity.

What this delightful pair want is an "ethnostate". This is an idea that has taken off in America among the "Groypers", led by Nick Fuentes and popularised by Tucker Carlson, who want to exclude brown and black-skinned people to produce a white-skinned society.

The first mistake is to think skin colour represents ethnicity. It does not. Ethnicity has been defined as the shared cultural identity of a group based on language, history and ancestry. Skin colour derives from geography and genetics. These don't necessarily overlap.

The fact that over the centuries British people were overwhelmingly white-skinned isn't the point. British identity was never about being white. It was a cultural thing, a set of ideas that developed over time from Britain's religion, institutions and collective historic experience as an island nation.

> The first mistake is to think that skin colour represents ethnicity

Nor is Britishness an ethnicity. It's a civic portmanteau identity spanning the nations of England, Scotland, Wales and (more contestably) Ireland, in whole or in part. Each nation has its own cultural sense of itself, as well as sharing in the more ancient identity forged by the British Isles.

As the historian Jonathan Clark has written, Britain developed as "a diverse and plural system of identities". Instead of an ethnically homogenous people, it accommodated differences.

The far right noisily identify British identity with Christianity. Britain has indeed been a Christian nation since the 7th century, if not earlier. Nevertheless, Britain is hardly a theocracy, and religious faith does not define belonging. A Hindu or a Sikh, a Jew or a Muslim is as British as anyone else.

To identify Britishness with Christianity is not only unpleasant but absurd. In the 2021 census, some 20.7 million people said they professed no religion at all. So it follows that Restore think more than one third of Britain's citizens — atheists or other secular unbelievers — aren't British either. Indeed, since only 46 per cent identify as Christians, Restore would presumably regard more than half of Britain's population as not really British at all.

A case can certainly be made that Britain and the West need to restore the biblical origins of their core values if their historic culture is to survive and thrive. However, non-white Britons are essential for this task. The census showed that, while 49 per cent of white British were Christian, this rose to almost 70 per cent among black people from Africa or the Caribbean.

It's precisely because Britain is not an ethnostate that it's uniquely hospitable to incomers and minorities. Upon taking citizenship, all become equally British.

It may take much longer — if ever — to feel distinctly English or any other subnational affinity, but that doesn't matter. All British citizens equally share a national identity based on a particular concept of political liberty and on institutions promoting the advance of civilisation, law and history.

At least, that's how it once was. Two things have undermined this. The first is what Britain and the West have done to themselves.

The intelligentsia has taught for decades that the western nation state is the source of prejudice, division and war. Postmodern historians said national identity was merely an imagined construct. Multiculturalism meant that the nation's historic identity had to give way to a babel of competing cultures that were deemed preferable.

This paved the way for the second blow to shared national identity, delivered by an unmanageable number of Muslim citizens who, rather than adapting to Britain, want Britain to adapt to Islam.

Since the Enlightenment, the western social contract has required minorities practising their faith and culture to do so under the overarching umbrella of core British and western values. Refusal to do so has been turned into a crisis by mass immigration.

The populist revolt against this gave rise to Reform in Britain and Maga in America, which spawned in turn Restore and the Groypers, who demand white Christian homogeneity. But blood-and-soil nationalism was Nazi ideology. It has never been a British thing. The way to deal with the erosion of British national identity is to promote, defend and celebrate its core values and institutions.

Restore activists claim to be defending Britain. In fact, they're trying to turn it into something totally un-British. They are sinister and clownish fringe artists; and as with their counterparts in America, they should be given no room in any big tent by anyone, anywhere.

Giles Coren Notebook

We're royally stuffed if our lust for blood doesn't slow

When I first saw the headline, "Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor to receive royal ceremonial funeral," I thought, "Wait, is he dead? Was that while I was on holiday? The poor bugger. But it's probably for the best. He had suffered enough. As when an old cat goes blind and its kidneys begin to fail, there comes a time when, although it cannot be spoken, everyone in the family knows it would be better for everyone if he just ..."

But it turns out Andrew is not dead. It's just everyone looking forward greedily to the time when he is and quivering with glee about new humiliations to be heaped upon him post mortem. It's so unpleasant. What do you want them to do with the old fool's body? Toss it over the battlements to placate the ravening horde? Sink it in the moat with stones in its pockets? Tie it by the heels to the back of a chariot and drag it round the walls of the city? Mince it for dog food? Or perhaps for fertiliser, like in Mao's China?

There comes a point in the public excoriation of an individual when the steepling national bloodlust begins to say more about the society from which it emanates than it does about the man it has taken against. We're getting close to that point. I know it's hot, I know it was great fun slaughtering Jason Arday last week, but I'd love it if we all just stepped back from the brink this morning and gave ourselves a minute to think.

Liddle galling

Rod Liddle shagged my girlfriend. To be fair, she wasn't still my girlfriend at the time of the shagging, we'd split up a few weeks before, but Rod and I weren't getting on at that stage in our lives and I took it rather personally. Especially because of the way I heard about it: from John Humphrys, in the *Today* studio, four seconds before we went live.

Humphrys had a famous knack for unsettling interviewees off air, but I was only there to talk about restaurant prices, not to defend my cabinet's taxation record, so was a bit surprised, as the producer counted us in, to hear him say, "by the way, Giles, what's this I hear about Rod Liddle and your girlfriend, ooh, sorry ... And here to talk about the problem is the Times restaurant critic, Giles Coren."

To this day, I remain more annoyed with John about it than Rod, who never claimed to have a personal moral compass, and with whom I made up decades ago.

We had a quiet little mutual admiration society going on, in fact, and the thing I will miss most, even more than his fearless columns and filthy Sid James laugh, is the Saturday morning texts I'd get when he'd read mine, saying: "You bastard! I was halfway through writing exactly that for The Sunday Times! Same f***ing intro! Same f***ing jokes!"

Drought discoveries

According to Monday's Times, the drought is throwing up more exciting ancient sites than ever to the aerial archaeologists who scour the land from above for the Iron Age farms, funeral sites, First World War trenches and lost country house gardens whose buried contours emerge as the land parches. It's the same in my garden. The "Total Death of Everything", as I pollyannaishly call what has happened to my Kentish Town backyard, has so far revealed: three rotted foam "indoor" footballs, assorted cricket, tennis and ping-pong balls, a bat, a tricycle, six rusted toy cars, Kitty's long-forgotten best friend "Panda" (not looking well), the mummified remains of two squirrels, a replica pistol of which nobody claims ownership and a potty. The British Museum has been informed.

Seed investment

I'll tell you what else I've found, pomegranates. Dozens of them. Growing on a bush at the back that I planted 20 years ago and recall now was sold to me as an "ornamental pomegranate". I also remember asking the guy at the garden centre if I'd ever get an actual pomegranate off it, and his laughter as he replied, "only if you plant it in Arizona!". Well, I didn't, and it's taken a while, but it looks like Arizona has come to me.

THUNDERER

Arday affair shows how academia is captured by identity

Nigel Biggar

The Arday affair's centre of gravity has shifted. Public discussion has moved on from Jason Arday's alleged personal mendacity to the question of why he was ever appointed to a professorial chair at Cambridge — and what that tells us about the state of higher education.

Why did the committee of eight professors and the vice-chancellor's deputy, who unanimously recommended his appointment, fail to scrutinise him? A leading answer is the identity of the applicant: a seemingly autistic man of African heritage, possessing double membership of historically marginalised and victimised groups.

This is entirely plausible. I've witnessed at first hand how some professors, even at our most prestigious universities, use their victim identity to trump intellectual standards and bypass accountability before the bar of reason. Several years ago, I took part in a panel discussion about empire in Oxford. A fellow panellist was a female professor of international relations. At one point, I turned to her and said, "A few moments ago, you said X. Now you've just said Y. They're not consistent." Waving her hand imperiously, she swept my complaint off the table, exclaiming, "Enough of your donnish, tutorial tactics!"

Dumbstruck, I thought, "Are there no rules to this game any longer? And if not, what on earth is the point?" Apparently, our discussion hadn't been a forum for truth discovery. Instead, it was an arena for making assertions and then silencing criticism by insinuating bad faith. Hence, "tactics". But there was more. For my tactics were allegedly "donnish", with its connotation of old white males in fusty tweed jackets, reeking of pipe smoke, circa 1950. My fellow panellist was exercising the political power of her identity as member of a victim group (women) over a member of an oppressor group (men) to silence me.

This was no isolated incident. Take the Canadian example of Frances Widdowson. After serving as a professor of political science at Mount Royal University for 14 years, she was fired in 2021. Why? Because when she disagreed that traditional Native American "star knowledge" should be treated as astronomical science, indigenous studies professors accused her of racist harassment, making the campus "unsafe" for them.

The Arday affair has lifted the lid on this problem in academe, just as the murder of Henry Nowak exposed it among the police. A local investigation by the University of Cambridge isn't enough. We need a national inquiry into the corrupting effect of identity politics on our universities.

Lord Biggar is former regius professor of moral theology at the University of Oxford

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At times, modern life seems pleasingly trivial

Zurbarán show is an immersion in saintly solemnity but today most of us would choose freedom over religious strictures

James Marriott

@J_AMESMARRIOTT

In a still life by the painter Francisco de Zurbarán, even a cup of water is as still and solemn as a saint. Lemons glow out of deep darkness, as luminous as the Holy Spirit itself.

The current exhibition at the National Gallery affords the viewer the opportunity to spend an instructive morning in the mental world of 17th-century Spain. If Zurbarán's fruit seem sacred, his saints must be among the holiest ever put on canvas. Mouths gape in speechless devotion, eyes roll searching upwards to heaven. There is something unnervingly childlike in the way a kneeling St Francis clasps his interlinked fingers around a skull.

To the casual visitor wandering in from the secular London sunshine on a Saturday morning, the atmosphere of seriousness is affronting. You feel, spiritually speaking, that you have turned up to a dowager duchess's party wearing only your swimming trunks.

Twenty-first-century life, almost everyone agrees, is hopelessly trivial. Atomised capitalist societies can supply their citizens with many things — Ozempic, smart watches, limitless online pornography — but they do a poor job at providing us with answers to the Big Questions. Why are we here? How should we live?

The "meaning crisis" is one presently fashionable diagnosis of the anxiety afflicting young people navigating our godless and materialist civilisation. On the right, Jordan Peterson and his many imitators urge the decadent young to return to hierarchy, order and faith. Various online movements attest to the pervasive modern nostalgia for meaning, from the "trad wives" living out picturesque fantasies of a

> To the casual visitor, the atmosphere of seriousness is affronting

patriarchal yesteryear on Instagram, to the ubiquitous reactionary nostalgists mourning the Middle Ages all over Elon Musk's X.

The moaners are not always wrong in the problems they diagnose. I have often joined my own voice to these lamentations. And yet, shivering slightly at those hollow-eyed visions of eternity, I resurface in Trafalgar Square reflecting that aimless and decadent modernity has at least a few things to be said in its favour. Certainly, the world Zurbarán painted was filled with meaning; the 17th-century addiction to allegory meant that every last flower and fruit is resonant with cosmic significance. But though it is a usefully astringent atmosphere in which to spend a couple of hours, I am glad I do not have to live among crucifixes and memento mori.

Many of the things that gave lives weight in the past — community, faith and social obligation — were more oppressive than many 21st-century nostalgists like to remember. The modern individualist notion that we are all free to create our own purpose and to pick our way through life as we please is undoubtedly a source of anxiety (just talk to a fresh university graduate trying to pick a career) but the alternative was not as appealing as some imagine.

For most people in the 17th century the meaning of one's life was hardly a question. Every man and woman had been slotted into place in a cosmic hierarchy that stretched from earthworms up through bakers, knights, kings and angels to God Himself. Such existential certainty may have been comforting. But the price of comfort was constriction. To be born with purpose can be oppressive. The royal family, among the last modern people whose lives are determined from before they are born, provide a warning of what a life overloaded with purpose can look like. And living in a palace doubtless takes the edge off things.

The historian Keith Thomas writes that in the 17th century the general attitude was that "Even the vagrant dying of starvation in the street should not grumble at his lot". Often, I suspect, real meaning involves a

> Often, real meaning involves a trade-off; it requires us to suffer

trade-off; it requires us to suffer.

Indeed, the most obvious reason our world feels so much more trivial than Zurbarán's is the disappearance of death from everyday life. The past was saturated by sickness and dying in a way that it is not easy for modern people to appreciate. It is exceptionally rare for modern children to die; until about a hundred years ago it was normal. "In the midst of life we are in death" as the Book of Common Prayer has it, stating what must once have seemed almost a platitude.

A wander through the National Gallery will confirm that Zurbarán was hardly the only painter who cluttered his work with skulls. Death not only makes life more solemn, it brings with it a train of thoughts about eternity and the meaning of life. Tragedy forced many of our ancestors into what was surely an unwilling proximity to the great questions. A society that can afford to think as little about death as ours (it is, as the cliché has it, "the last taboo") can comfortably dodge weighty matters. If this makes us frivolous it also counts as victory.

For all the fashionable hand-wringing, I suspect many people desire meaning less than they think. Or, at least, they would be reluctant to make the necessary trade-offs. From Ireland to South Korea, the evidence of the past hundred years of secularisation suggests that when given the choice between a life rooted in faith, community and God on the one hand and aimless freedom on the other, almost everyone (with perhaps the Amish as an honourable exception) chooses freedom.

So yes, of course I agree that we are a lamentably trivial culture. I also give thanks for something our God-haunted ancestors never knew; an all too bearable lightness of being. After Zurbarán I put serious things out of my mind and wandered off to a café and ate a sandwich, in floods of meaningless summer sunshine.

Letters to the Editor

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Cern's fears for UK

Sir, Rhys Blakely rightly highlights tension between "curiosity-driven" research and work claiming "quicker returns" ("Jodrell Bank could be saved, but at what cost to other research?", Aug 1). Scientists understand that funding is competitive. Their alarm over recent UK Research and Innovation decisions stems instead from cuts that Dame Chi Onwurah MP, chair of the science, innovation and technology committee, has described as "unacceptable".

UK participation in LHCb, one of the four Cern flagship experiments, has been hit particularly hard. Describing LHCb as simply "curiosity-driven" overlooks its wider returns. The UK's decades-long investment has built world-leading expertise, trained graduates in AI, data science and computing, and driven advances in detectors, semiconductors and electronics.

Britain holds major leadership positions in LHCb and supported the European Strategy for Particle Physics, which prioritises exploiting the High-Luminosity LHC, including the LHCb upgrade. Yet UK funding for that upgrade has now been withdrawn. The UK contribution would cost just £4.5 million a year — about 0.05 per cent of UKRI's budget. The saving is small; the damage to scientific leadership, skills and Britain's reputation as a reliable international partner is not. The new Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade has inherited the consequences of this decision. It also has the opportunity to reverse it.
Paula Collins
Deputy spokesperson,
LHCb Experiment, Cern

Gatwick approval

Sir, I am surprised that the prime minister has not revisited the decision to approve a second runway at Gatwick (report, Aug 5) as it is contrary to his policy of encouraging growth in the regions. Gatwick, unlike Heathrow, is primarily a holiday transport facility. People in other parts of the UK also have holidays and would also benefit from the construction phase of any expansion. The need for employment in other parts of the country is surely greater than it is in the southeast. London, arguably, already has enough airport capacity if more people in the UK could use a local airport. The regions would find that increased airport capacity and connections would lead to increased development locally. It is not too late to cancel this second runway approval at Gatwick.
Richard Lockwood
Chiddingstone, Kent

Corrections and clarifications

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Creeping takeover of the 20mph speed limit

Sir, As Libby Purves indicates, Lynda La Plante's experience is shocking ("20mph speed limits play havoc with the mind", Aug 10). It is time the government stepped in to control the creeping growth of 20mph speed limits. May I suggest we simply dispense with all speed limits and introduce a single offence of driving at a speed inappropriate for the prevailing road conditions? That would enable due flexibility as between conditions on a particular road at say 3am and the rush hour. Those who put the lives of others at risk tend to be a tiny minority of grossly irresponsible drivers who will continue in that vein, speed limit or not. The majority of us are reliable and sensible, and know what is a correct speed at which to drive.
Michael Judkins
Ely, Cambs

Sir, Every road user knows that the 20mph speed limit is ludicrous and punitive. As a general restriction, it is simply too slow. There were no doubt good reasons for the choice of 20mph but probably the principal one was that it is a round number. But that number would make little sense in mainland Europe, where it translates as 32km/h. Better, surely, to choose 25mph, equating exactly to 40km/h, a far more reasonable speed and one that most road users would find completely manageable.
Geoff Hunt
London SW19

Sir, When thousands of law-abiding citizens are being penalised every year for "speeding", there is clearly something wrong. The 33 per cent reduction in speed from 30mph to the funereal 20mph is enormous compared with the 14 per cent reduction from 70mph to 60mph. In many urban areas, 30mph may well a little too fast but reducing speeds below 25mph would provide the required safety improvement. The main reason to prosecute drivers just a few miles an hour over the limit appears to be to raise revenue.

Nobody has explained why the old "rule of thumb" should no longer apply, allowing 10 per cent over the speed limit plus 2mph leeway.
David Rosen
Lancaster

Sir, Among the more than 125,000 motorists caught out in a 20mph zone in Britain last year were two of my family, who were clocked accelerating away from dangerous traffic situations at 22mph and 23mph in London ("How 20mph is taking over towns", Aug 8). Because of this, when I tried to renew our car insurance recently, the cost had risen by £500 — making those money-hungry businesses even larger profits.
Lesley Thompson
Lavenham, Suffolk

Sir, I suggest that the road markings in 20mph zones be a different colour, to remind drivers what the speed limit is. The same principle could be used on roads with 60mph or 70mph limits.
Jim Patrick
Kilsyth, North Lanarkshire

Sir, The most useful information I gathered from the speed awareness course I attended some years ago was from my fellow attendees: the locations of other speed traps.
Nigel Austin
Dorchester, Dorset

Letters to The Times must be exclusive and may be edited. Please include a full address and daytime telephone number.

Interviewing Arday

Sir, Events in Cambridge suggest a reluctance on the part of those tasked with interviewing candidates to seek out the truth ("Fawning liberals laid ground for Arday farce", Trevor Phillips, Aug 10). If the cause of such reluctance is embarrassment on the part of the interviewer to directly challenge the candidate as to the truthfulness of their curriculum vitae (letter from Sir Peter Riddell, Aug 8), there is an alternative, less direct, method. This is to ask the candidate about their achievements while expressing suitable enthusiasm for what has apparently been achieved. If there is a suspicion that the candidate has embellished their CV this will rapidly become apparent.

By way of example, years ago I was required to interview a candidate for pupillage, a form of apprenticeship, in barristers' chambers. In their CV the candidate referred, as a mark of personal prestige, to the fact that they had appeared in a well-known TV quiz show. I said that this was quite an achievement and began to ask for details. It soon became clear that the candidate was not one of the quiz team but merely a member of the audience. When seeking to get at the truth, there is always more than one way to skin a cat.
Christopher Aylwin
London SW6

Sir, The controversy surrounding the appointment of professorships at universities has its origins in the 1980s, when the government introduced a ranking process with financial incentives: first for research and later for teaching. It is a common fallacy to believe the Darwinian forces thus unleashed select "the best". Instead, they select those most successful at gaming the prevailing system; a process that applies systemically to the applicants and the institutions that appoint them. By that analysis, the present mess is probably just the tip of the iceberg.
Mark Lansdale
Emeritus professor of experimental psychology; Keyham, Leics

Glut of candidates

Sir, The plethora of candidates at the Clacton by-election — a record 34 at the last count — does not enhance parliamentary democracy. The Representation of the People Act 1983 requires an aspiring Westminster candidate to obtain support from just ten electors registered in the constituency, known as subscribers. The first two are the proposer and seconder while eight are the assenters to the nomination (Schedule 1, rule 7). Instead of depositing £500 and obtaining backing from a handful of electors, the law should be amended to 500 registered electors and no deposit. Then voters would be faced with serious choices for their MP who had already shown local support.
Conal Gregory
Conservative MP for York 1983-92

Frustrated Odyssey

Sir, Our old ears must be more noise-intolerant than Sathnam Sanghera's ("Imax-ed out", Notebook, Aug 10). We endured less than one minute of *The Odyssey* at our local Imax before walking out. The manager kindly refunded the £40 we had paid, apparently to have our hearing damaged.
Tom Yeo
Enfield, Middx

SUBMARINE DISASTER IN PLYMOUTH

FROM THE TIMES AUGUST 11, 1926

An announcement was issued from the Admiralty in connexion with the accident to Submarine H29: "The Secretary of the Admiralty regrets to announce that, in addition to those already reported as having lost their lives in Submarine H29, it has now been definitely ascertained that H Hill, engine fitter, No 9647, was on board the submarine when she sank, and must also have been killed. Salvage operations are in progress, and when the submarine has been raised, an inquiry will be carried out to determine the cause of the accident."

Work is continuing with a view to raising the submarine, but up to this evening it has been without result. In spite of the fact that she sank in one of the basins of the Devonport dockyard, with various appliances in the way of cranes and salvage gear close at hand, the operations have proved exceptionally difficult. This is partly accounted for by the fact that in sinking she turned over. Before she can be raised it is necessary to get her into an upright position, and, as she is full of water, she is hard to move.

A large body of divers and other men have been employed in the work. All other efforts having failed, hawsers have now been placed below the ship with a view to towing her to another position in the basin where a caisson can be constructed about her and the water pumped out. A court of inquiry will be held to-day under the presidency of Captain EC Boyle, VC, captain of the dockyard.

An account is given by one of the survivors of an attempt to save the submarine by blowing out the tanks to make her buoyant when the disaster was impending. Chief Engine-room Artificer Dalton and Lieutenant ME Wevell were in the submarine when she began to list, and they remained below up to the point when the vessel was flooded, standing by the tanks. Lieutenant Wevell was swept up the conning tower as the submarine sank, but Dalton was trapped below and drowned. Both men, it is stated, were on deck when the accident occurred, and went below in their attempt to save the vessel.

Lieutenant Wevell, who was seriously injured in his escape, was stated to be making good progress.

Five civilians and one crewman died. Wevell and another officer were found guilty of negligence.

THETIMES.COM/ARCHIVE

Valuable heritage

Sir, Your article "Haigh will not grace Admiralty residence" (Aug 6) and the letters that followed (Aug 8 & 10) raise a wider point about grace-and-favour houses. Chequers (1,500 acres), Chevening (3,000 acres) and Dorneywood (215 acres) sit largely unused for most of the year, and are for the exclusive use of the prime minister, foreign secretary and chancellor. All three are held by independent trusts, so a straightforward sale is not an option. But they could become part-time public heritage destinations, much as the royal family has shown works with its own residences. Run well, the three estates together could conservatively generate a net surplus of £5 million to £10 million a year. That could go toward the prime minister's first commitment in office: to end rough sleeping. There's something compelling about vast, underused properties helping to house people who have no home.
Alan Coppin
Former CEO, Historic Royal Palaces, and former visitor attractions expert, KPMG Consulting

Early release row

Sir, Although I agree with the general tenor of John Young's letter (Aug 10), he is wrong to ascribe the choice of charges of manslaughter against the three defendants as the choice of the Crown Prosecution Service. In fact the three were charged with murder, with manslaughter charges as alternatives. The jury, as was within its remit, rejected the charges of murder and convicted of manslaughter. The sentences for manslaughter were considered by the Court of Appeal as not being unduly lenient. If the jury had convicted of murder, the sentencing judge's mandatory life sentences with minimum terms to be served would have forestalled the present problems over release.
His Honour Gerald Clifton
Oakham, Rutland

Welsh new wave

Sir, The James Bond movies provide an exciting retitling opportunity for the Welsh market (letters, Aug 6-8 & 10). May I add the following to the list? *Diamonds Are For Ifor*, *Dai Another Day* and *Licence to Rhyl*.
Bonnie White
Wells, Somerset

Sir, After *Dial M for Merthyr* perhaps we could head to the Cambrian Mountains of mid-Wales for the beginning of *The Magnificent Severn*.
Steve Butlin
Cambridge

Jargon-busting

Sir, Never mind "from the get-go" (letter, Aug 10). What's all this waffle about one's "backstory"?
Nigel Souter
North Berwick, East Lothian

It's a dog's life

Sir, I also had to smile about Deborah Ross's article (Aug 8; letter, Aug 10) on owning a dog. It reminded me of my late father, who was Polish. Whenever his adult children got a dog, he would throw up his hands and say: "You have no problems? You get dog!" He swore that it was an old Polish saying but I'm not so sure.
Kath Berrisford
Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs

Daily Universal Register

UK: British Retail Consortium releases monthly sales report.
Australia: Five-yearly census is held.

Nature notes

Roe deer hold their rut in high summer, earlier than red or fallow deer, and usually peaking in the second week of August. Normally timid and peaceable, during mating season the males, known as bucks, become vocal, aggressive and vigilant. They begin to set up territories in March and April, usually in the same area as the previous year: a good territory will have food, cover and access to several solitary does. Does are fertile and receptive for only 36 to 48 hours each year, during which time bucks will attend them so closely — sometimes chasing them in wide circles — that they often fail to eat or drink and may even collapse from exhaustion. After the rut, the males' territories dissolve.
MELISSA HARRISON

Birthdays today

Chris Hemsworth, *pictured*, actor, *Rush* (2013), the *Avengers* film series, 43; **Tom Blomfield**, co-founder of Monzo (digital bank), 41; **Don Boyd**, film director and producer, *Aria* (1987), 78; **Sir Geoffrey Cass**, chairman and co-founder, Royal Theatrical Support Trust, chairman, Royal Shakespeare Company (1985-2000), 94; **Sir Jack Cuzick**, emeritus professor of epidemiology, Queen Mary University of London, 78; **Viola Davis**, actress, *Fences* (2016), 61; **Peter Eisenman**, architect, Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin (2005), 94; **Sir Ben Elliot**, co-chairman of the Conservative Party (2019-22), co-founder, Quintessentially Group (concierge), 51; **Kenneth Gamble**, songwriter and producer, created the Philly Sound with Leon Huff, *Love Train* (the O'Jays, 1972), 83; **Mike Hugg**, musician, Manfred Mann, *Do Wah Diddy Diddy* (1964), 84; **Lord (Anthony) Hughes of Ombersley**, deputy investigatory powers commissioner, justice of the Supreme Court (2013-18), 78; **Joe Jackson**, musician, *Is She Really Going Out with Him?* (1978), 72; **Ashley Jensen**, actress, *Agatha Raisin* (2014-22), 57; **Charlotte Leslie**, managing director, Conservative Middle East Council, MP for Bristol North West (2010-17), 48; **Sri Prakash Lohia**, businessman, founder and chairman of Indorama Corporation (petrochemicals and textiles), 74; **Ian McDiarmid**, actor, Emperor Palpatine in the *Star Wars* film series, 82; **James Mates**, journalist, Europe editor, ITV News, 65; **John Micklethwait**, editor-in-chief, Bloomberg News, The Economist (2006-15), 64; **Sophie Okonedo**, actress, *Hotel Rwanda* (2004), 58; **Richard Scudamore**, chief executive , Premier League (1999-2014), 67; **Masayoshi Son**, businessman, founder and chief executive, SoftBank (investment holding company), 69; **Dame Sue Street**, chairwoman, Rambert dance company (2019-Jun 2026), 77; **Sandi Thom**, singer-songwriter, *I Wish I Was a Punk Rocker (With Flowers in My Hair)* (2006), 45; **Steve Wozniak**, co-founder of Apple Computer, Inc (1976), 76.

On this day

In **1919** the Weimar Constitution came into being, creating a postwar German state.

The last word

"Every generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it, and wiser than the one that comes after it."
George Orwell, author and journalist, Poetry Quarterly (1945)

Wise Men

Andy Burnham's failure to appoint serious economic advisers undermines his credibility. It also highlights the government's urgent need for a plan for growth

Sir Keir Starmer's curtailed stint in Downing Street might have been shorter still had it not been for his successor's ill repute in the City. As a former chief secretary to the Treasury and mayor of England's fastest-growing region, Andy Burnham may feel accusations of economic illiteracy are unfair. But for months, as Sir Keir's unpopularity plumbed new depths and skittish Labour MPs looked covetously at Mr Burnham's then-stratospheric approval ratings, those accusations were thrown again and again from inside the Treasury.

Critics denounced Mr Burnham as a spendthrift whose promises of mass nationalisation would bankrupt the country. Last September, he seemingly vindicated them when he pronounced that Britain had "got to get beyond this thing of being in hock to the bond markets". After the disasters of Trussenomics, it was widely interpreted as an admission of naivety. It fuelled a consensus that Mr Burnham, however impressive his command of municipal politics, no longer understood the basic responsibilities, and constraints, of the national government he aspired to lead.

Mr Burnham has always insisted he was misinterpreted. In fact, he said, he wanted to remake the state so that it would not borrow so much money in the first place. Campaigning for the Labour leadership in the Makerfield by-election, he was careful to stress his commitment to fiscal responsibility. To that end, the leader-in-waiting's team made much of the presence of three wise men of British economics in their inner circle. They were Lord O'Neill of Gatley, a Treasury minister under George Osborne; Andy Haldane, the former chief economist of the Bank of England; and Richard Hughes, until last autumn the chairman of the Office for Budget Responsibility.

The desired effect was reassurance. With so much wise counsel from economists of renown, how dangerous could Mr Burnham be? Their advisory roles were a welcome sign that he was taking the obligations and harsh realities of office seriously. Lord O'Neill and Mr Haldane had done important work on regional inequality for Conservative prime ministers. Mr Hughes, meanwhile, had spent his latter years in public service ensuring the sums added up, no matter how grisly the political implications.

Not one of these three wise men, however, is now working in Downing Street. Nor are they to be found in the Treasury, where John Healey is sorely lacking an economic adviser with the credentials to prove he can amount to something more than a compromise choice as chancellor. There are no jobs, it seems, for Mr Haldane and Mr Hughes. And, as The Times has revealed, Lord O'Neill — while reluctant to abandon his business interests to the stewardship of a blind trust — has yet to be reassured that Mr Burnham has woken up to the folly of wealth taxes. Their absence leaves a worrying gap: Sir Keir learnt the same lesson too late, when he hired Baroness Shafik as his economic adviser in September — far too late for her appointment to make any difference.

As he preaches the gospel of "Manchesterism" on social media, Mr Burnham has shown he is willing to wield the power of the state to mitigate the cost of living crisis. Or, in other words, he is very capable of spending money. Come the budget, he and Mr Healey will have to find at least £10 billion for his capped bus fares and cuts to VAT and business rates — as well as filling the black hole in defence spending. The best way to fund such measures is a plan to make Britain's economy grow at a Mancunian pace. So far, the prime minister has offered up little to suggest he has a credible theory of growth. The Burnham government has instead been chiefly focused on cutting up ever smaller slices of the same pie. Wiser economic counsel would go some way to show the country he offers more than profligacy and higher taxes.

Mutual Defence

The Middle East is looking for ways to defend itself without the US cavalry

Despite its many wars and explosions, the Middle East remains a region in search of institutional stability. The Mecca agreement, just reached between Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan is intended to bring that goal closer — but could end up exposing irreconcilable differences between three of the region's influential power-brokers.

The founding principle of the new defence pact is an obvious copy-and-paste borrowing from the Nato alliance's crucial common commitment: "any armed attack against any one of the three states shall be regarded as an attack against them all". The wording has prompted commentators to describe the new alignment as the starting point for a Sunni Nato. Saudi Arabia brings capital, energy and military procurement ambition to this defensive alliance; Pakistan brings a nuclear arsenal and large manpower reserves; and Turkey provides not only the real Nato's second largest army but also ambitious intelligence-driven military and strategic engagement across the extended Arabic and Turkic-speaking neighbourhood.

It represents the first major step in the Middle East and South Asia towards an indigenous security architecture and a move away from a vassal-like dependence on the American security umbrella. It may also act as a hedge against any sudden shifts by the White House.

In the Turkish and Saudi case, it is intended as a counterweight to Israel's power projection in the Middle East. And it is a recognition that Iran has emerged more strongly than expected from its extended war against its neighbours. In April Pakistan deployed a squadron of fighter jets and crew to a Saudi air base to defend against Iranian attacks. Turkey's military co-operation with the Saudis has been deepening in preparation for a new round of fighting against the Houthi rebels. The Saudis have signed major drone procurement and training deals with Turkey.

Yet the Mecca pact is still a thousand leagues away from being a new Nato. It has no integrated command structure, no joint doctrine, no integrated air defence network, and no joint operational commands. It is best seen as a defensive state-to-state arrangement that could, over time, come up with solutions to challenges. Saudi Arabia's natural defensive domain is the Gulf Co-operation Council, which has revealed some of its many tensions in the protracted showdown with Iran. Pakistan has a formal strategic alignment with China — what will its new allies do if tensions grow between India and China? The limits to Mr Erdogan's bonds with the US were clearly visible in the preparations for a Kurd-assisted regime change in Iran. Ankara was having none of it.

If the new pact is to take root and grow it will first have to be a mutually reinforcing defence industrial complex at a time when wars everywhere are burning through equipment. In the meantime, Saudi Arabia should not shrug off the option of joining the Abraham Accords that will help bring Israel into a more general strategic discourse. The Saudi leadership shuns that diplomatic axis as long as Israel denies the possibility of a Palestinian state. Israel says it cannot begin to consider peace in Gaza until the Hamas terror group verifiably decommissions its weapons and closes its tunnel network. If the Saudis and the Turks applied more pressure on Hamas to disarm, then progress could be made there too. The Middle East remains in urgent need of fresh thinking.

In The Shade

As summers become hotter, cities need more trees to cool us down

In case you haven't been outside for a few months, Britain is enduring a very hot summer. The Met Office has issued rolling alerts, warning of ever more extreme temperatures. Heatwaves are stifling everyday life, while more than 25 million Britons are enduring hosepipe bans. If such weather is the new norm, how can we better cope as a nation? Installing more air conditioning is a good start. Another is to build more reservoirs, so longer spells without rain are more manageable. Then there is the challenge of cities facing soaring levels of urban heat and melting pavements that are burning the feet of dogs and cats.

Thankfully, there is a solution — a very obvious one. The Create Streets Foundation, an urban-design think tank, argues in a new report that we need more trees, or the "urban wonder drug" as it labels them. Its researchers pounded the streets of Southwark and Lambeth last month with a thermal-imaging camera to prove the cooling effect of green leaves. In some locations, the surfaces of pavements and children's playgrounds were a scorching 55C. In shaded areas, just metres away, it was 25C to 30C cooler. This echoes earlier research which found that atmospheric temperatures were 5C to 7C cooler on tree-lined streets.

We must, therefore, plant more trees. Create Streets argues that the 1980 Highways Act needs reworking to ensure new greenery is not automatically judged a bad thing. Local authorities need to speed up approvals and allow residents to plant more. Landowners should also carry a greater duty of care for trees already on their land. There is much about the warming climate that will be hard to manage, especially in dense cities. But cooling the streets is not one of them. For cleaner air, happier and more beautiful places to live, and cooler temperatures, planting more trees is nearly always the right thing to do.

World

AI-powered drone swarms stir fear in Europe's armies

Germany
Oliver Moody Berlin

Half a dozen quadcopter drones hover over the scrubland at a Florida national guard training base, weaving around one another like a small flock of seagulls flying into the wind.

Then, at a command from a human pilot, three of them swoop downwards in sequence, obliterating a row of inflatable tanks on a road while the others linger overhead to observe the damage.

For many years the prospect of artificial intelligence-powered drone swarms has been a nightmare looming on the fringes of modern warfare.

Now, as this strike test video released a few months ago by the German-American defence technology company Auterion illustrates, it is increasingly encroaching onto the battlefield and worrying Europe's defence planners and national security officials.

"We have had huge concern about this," Jens Römer, chief technology officer at the German government's Zitis IT security agency, told a drone defence conference at the former Tegel airport on the outskirts of Berlin.

"We are still in a situation today where the detection and defence systems can be overwhelmed very quickly and can't assess the situation fast enough ... This is something that deeply worries us in the security services because the military countermeasures, which have generally been effective in Ukraine, don't work in this context."

Ukraine has served as the primary laboratory for this emerging technology. Its armed forces have been experimenting with increasingly large autonomous attack and reconnaissance swarms on the front line, starting with small units of only two strike drones and a "spotter".

Using software from Swarmer, a Ukrainian defence firm, operators can dispatch independent "hunter-killer" squadrons of eight or more drones to identify and eliminate Russian targets.

At least six defence firms elsewhere in Europe are known to have conducted successful tests of swarm technology, and an operator directs up to 18 drones at a time. In the United States, military contractors have demonstrated autonomous networks of more than a hundred drones and the Pentagon is aiming to create a "swarm of swarms" capability with as many as 500 units.

In March China revealed the Atlas system, which uses vehicles to launch up to 96 drones that are simultaneously controlled from a single command post.

Marcel "Otto" Yon, the chief executive of Autonomous Teaming, a German defence software start-up that makes counter-drone systems and its own flocks of autonomous reconnaissance drones, said it would only be a matter of time before forces could deploy swarms with thousands of drones in the land, air and sea domains, functioning like independent AI-directed battle formations.

"This becomes, just by its pure scale, a new type of weapon of mass destruction," he said. "If you really come to a point where you have 10,000 drones that operate fully autonomously — detecting targets, tracking, executing — that is a whole new type of capability."

Yon added: "This is exactly the scenario we felt we needed to protect our forces and civilisations from: [swarms] not just with flying drones, but also humanoid robots, ground vehicles, maritime drones and so on."

Over the past few years, Europeans have become used to seeing waves of Russian attack drones descending on Ukrainian cities and penetrating deep into Polish airspace. Although these formations of flying bombs and decoys are sometimes described as "swarms", and it is thought that some degree of AI may be used in planning the offensives, a true swarm of linked and autonomous

An interception drone on show at Berlin's "resilience day" last month

drones poses a different level of threat. The drones form an interlaced group, a little like a murmuration of starlings, under the direction of a single pilot — although they can operate without human instructions. This ability is crucial in environments where radio signals are routinely cut or distorted by intense electromagnetic warfare.

Professor Wolfgang Koch, head of the sensor and information fusion department at the Fraunhofer FKIE research centre near Bonn, explained that the swarms could not only react flexibly to the enemy's defences but improvise their own sophisticated tactics to overwhelm them.

European militaries are conducting exercises with the technology. In March troops from the British, American and Australian armies flew co-ordinated reconnaissance drone swarms over Salisbury Plain.

A few weeks later the US army's V Corps tested some of the most advanced Nato drone defences against swarms from several European and American defence technology firms during a wargame in Lithuania called Project Flytrap 5.0. It was understood that some of the swarms beat the counter-drone systems.

Henning Reimann, head of the department in the German armed forces' central planning office that deals with integrating complex new technologies, said: "For us it is not quite reality just yet. But I'm certain it will increasingly be the case that a single operator will control a number of drones that can act more or less autonomously."

Yon said the arms race was moving so rapidly that metrics such as the number of drones in a swarm and the rate of successful target detection were improving by about 25 per cent every three months.

"The rate of innovation on the Russian side is quite impressive," he said. "Is mass cluster autonomy in strike drones something we're going to see very soon? Absolutely ... When a technology progresses that fast, it means you have a tenfold change in two and a half years, and a hundredfold progression in five years. I'm very confident in saying that yes, absolutely, we will see things like this in the next five years."

Yet the defensive side is also evolving quickly. At the Berlin drone resilience day organised last month by the Behörden Spiegel newspaper, various German firms showed off tools ranging from jammers that could seize control of drones to drones that fire nets and "interceptor" models designed for kamikaze missions against incoming loitering munitions.

Inleap Photonics and Stark demonstrated an uncrewed ground vehicle mounted with laser cannons and conducted a live-fire test where a German army officer sitting in Berlin used the system to incinerate a quadcopter near Hanover, about 150 miles away.

The difficulty is that each of these instruments may be too slow, expensive or cumbersome to hold off an elaborately orchestrated bombardment by hundreds of linked strike drones moving at speeds of more than 100mph.

The next generation of start-ups is addressing this problem, with answers including highly portable rapid-fire "gatling" lasers and what purports to be fully automated drone defence command software that can respond to threats significantly faster than a human operator.

"Over-saturation is a long-standing tactical manoeuvre in warfare," Yon said. "A degree of tactical sophistication is happening already in Ukraine, just manually. You will send 20 decoy drones and then five real [strike] drones ... If that is done by AI, then all it does is scale the ability to do so and make it easier. If the rate of fire increases, then it makes the need for good counter[-drone] solutions even higher. That's the eternal innovation race between attacker and defender."

Sea horses **A Camargue herd thunder through the waves in southern France.**

'Sunni Muslim Nato' pact shows desire for autonomy from US

Turkey
Liz Cookman Istanbul

The defence pact signed on Friday between Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan has been described as a "Sunni Muslim Nato".

Three of the most militarily powerful Sunni states pledged that an armed attack on any one of them would be regarded as an attack on all three.

The Mecca joint defence agreement could be, among other things, a big expansion of President Erdogan's role as a security provider in the Middle East.

However, it has raised questions, primarily about who the pact's most likely adversaries are and whether the three would really leap to each others' defence if only one country's interests were at stake. Analysts say the pact may be "sending a message" rather than making an iron guarantee.

Either way it springs from the Middle East's worsening security situation. The Gaza conflict still shows signs of activity and acompanies hostilities between Israel, the US and Iran that have lasted nearly six months.

Israel is also fighting Hezbollah in

Indian villagers revolt over water-gulping data centre
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Democrat's egg-freezing sets off political debate
Page 26

KAT ZHOU/TWOPOINTO MEDIA

The horses live semi-wild in the marshes of the Rhône delta and are known for their stamina, hardiness and agility

Syrian retreat blows new hole in Putin's dream of global role

Russia
Marc Bennetts

Doubts about the use of key military bases in the Middle East; a warm welcome for the Ukrainian president by a traditional European ally; an unprecedented show of defiance by the leader of a former Soviet state. The past few weeks have delivered one blow after another to the Kremlin's hopes of retaining its global influence, while the war in Ukraine grinds on.

Syria announced on Sunday that Russia's Hmeimim airbase and Tartus naval base would no longer be controlled exclusively by Moscow and that the military facilities would be turned into "joint training" centres. They were Russia's only official military bases outside the former Soviet Union.

Bashar al-Assad, a key Kremlin ally, was toppled in 2024 by rebel forces and replaced as Syria's president by Ahmed al-Sharaa, a commander in the Islamist-led insurgency. Although Russia's army had propped up Assad for nine years, killing thousands of Syrian rebels and civilians, President Putin ordered his forces to stand aside as rebels swept into Damascus.

While Syria insisted the deal had been agreed with Moscow and would preserve mutual interests, it said civilian facilities at both bases would be handed to Damascus. The Kremlin has yet to comment and details of the agreement have not been made public.

Hanna Notte, an expert on Russian foreign policy and the Middle East, said it was increasingly unlikely that Russia would be able to use the Syrian bases for its military purposes in the future but that it should not be ruled out.

"There's a big Russian wariness over the extent to which Sharaa can actually hold power and stabilise Syria," said Notte. "The Russian thinking might well be, 'Let's see where Syria is at five or ten years down the line. We're just going to bide our time'."

Russia has used its bases in Syria to move supplies and fighters to the Africa Corps, a Kremlin-controlled successor to the Wagner mercenary group, in Libya, Mali, the Central African Republic and elsewhere on the continent.

The airbase deal was criticised by hardliners. "We have expended vast resources and the lives of our officers, soldiers and Wagner fighters to establish a Russian foothold in the region — and now we are going to ask those bearded [fighters] and their Turkish handlers for permission to be present at our own bases?" wrote Igor Yeliseyev, a former lawyer for Wagner, which was funded by the Russian government.

The Syrian announcement came on the 27th anniversary of Putin's appointment as prime minister. Months later, he took over as president and set about restoring Moscow's Soviet-era global influence. That effort has been largely sacrificed to Putin's obsession with achieving victory in Ukraine.

Although the regime in Iran, which has provided military support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine, has so far survived a US-Israeli bombing campaign, the Kremlin has been unable to prevent the downfall of other allies.

Russia could not stop Nicolás Maduro, the pro-Moscow leader of Venezuela, from being seized by American special forces. Viktor Orban, whose government in Hungary was seen as the Kremlin's "Trojan horse" in the European Union, was defeated at the ballot box. Russia has also lost clout in the South Caucasus, where Armenia and Azerbaijan are moving away from the Kremlin's sphere of influence.

The waning of Russian was likely to make Putin even more determined to achieve his goals in Ukraine, Notte said. "If you threw everything at this war and you made other foreign policy dossiers subordinate to that and even accepted that you are losing influence in other parts of the world, all for the sake of this effort of subjugating Ukraine, then you really have to come out on top," she said.

Lebanon, despite a ceasefire, and occupying parts of post-Assad Syria, whose principal backer is Erdogan's Turkey.

All three countries that have joined the pact are key US allies, technically putting them on the anti-Iranian "side" of the region's structural divide.

Hakan Fidan, Turkey's foreign minister, insisted the pact was not pointed at Iran. However, Saudi Arabia has been bombed by Iran and its oil industry is one of the biggest economic losers. Iranian missiles have been shot down as they headed for Turkish air space. Pakistan has complex but often hostile relations with Iran, a neighbour.

The military capabilities of each are not trivial. Pakistan is the only Muslim-majority nuclear power and Saudi Arabia has the Gulf's leading Arab military. Turkey has the second-largest army in Nato and a thriving defence industry.

While all three nations have concerns about Iran and have criticised Israel's actions in Gaza and elsewhere in the region, their primary threats are different. Pakistan continues to regard India as its main national security concern; Turkey has longstanding issues with Greece, and over Cyprus, as well as its involvement in Syria; Saudi Arabia's main fighting front in recent years has been with the Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen.

Asli Aydintasbas, an analyst at the Washington-based Brookings Institution, said the pact was more based on collective deterrence than on collective defence. "This is not a replica of Nato," she said. Aydintasbas said the pact was partly "aspirational", reflecting Turkey's desire to build "a larger, multinational defence architecture in the Middle East" while sending messages to both Iran and Israel.

Underlying that structure is the need perceived by all three to create a security infrastructure centred on the region but independent of western powers, particularly the US.

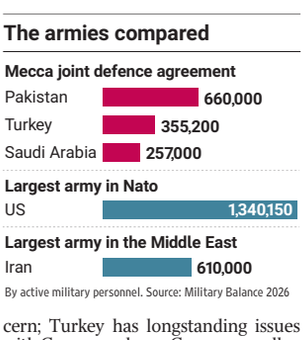
Omer Ozkizilcik, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, said there was a wider shift towards regional powers taking greater responsibility for their own security. "The first goal of the pact is to enhance regional co-operation and lead the region into a new security environment," he said.

Aydintasbas said US officials she had consulted did not appear concerned by the agreement. Rather, it fits into the Trump administration's demand for greater "burden sharing" by US allies.

However, the most obvious result may be to promote mutual defence procurement — the trade in weapons.

Middle East looking for defence without the US cavalry, leading article, page 21

The armies compared



By active military personnel. Source: Military Balance 2026

Cold-calls ban gets poor reception from French

France
David Chazan Paris

Almost everyone in France resents being deluged with unsolicited sales calls and most now ignore any number they do not recognise.

Yet there is widespread scepticism that a ban on spam calls, which comes into force today, will bring much relief.

In theory, telemarketers may now only contact those who have expressly consented — but there are loopholes.

Mobile phone and utility providers will be permitted to call existing customers to offer new services. Pollsters and charities seeking donations are exempt, as are newspapers offering subscriptions by cold call (The Times, naturally, would never indulge in such a practice). Spam calls are a modern nuisance everywhere, but France appears to suffer more than most: it is markedly worse than the UK. Parliament passed the ban after a survey by a US security company found that 43 per cent of all calls to French phones were unsolicited and made from numbers not in the recipient's contact list.

Capucine, 30, a graphic artist from Paris, said she welcomed the ban, with reservations. "How can they stop calls from outside France?" she asked.

Benoît, 62, an engineer from Lyon, was similarly doubtful. "I think telemarketing firms will find ways around the law," he said. "But let's hope it works."

Le Parisien struck an optimistic note. An editorial observed that "No junk mail" signs on letterboxes had proved "fairly effective" and suggested that the same might be true of the cold-call ban.

World

Village revolts over Google's water-gulping data centre

Anger is brewing over a project, lured by tax breaks, in a state hit by drought, **Amrit Dhillon** reports from Tarluvada

When Google came calling, Sandhama Chandala said she did not have time to consider what would happen to the land where her grandfather planted mango and cashew trees, tilled the pinkish soil and carried water to his crops.

She also did not have time to consider how water would be diverted to feed the relentless hum of servers that will form part of a $17 billion AI data centre, Google's largest outside the US, built in a lush region an hour's drive from the port city of Vizag in Andhra Pradesh.

"I didn't want to sell," said Chandala, 50. "My grandfather toiled to make it arable. We carried water on our heads. The land gave us a livelihood. But the officials who came said we had to sell. When a few villagers agreed, I too felt under pressure to sell." Chandala and the 200 families in the village state of Tarluvada are known as Dalits, among the lowest in the Hindu caste system. In the mid-1970s, the federal government assigned them their land — two acres per family — to provide them a livelihood.

Many have sold theirs as part of plans to create the data centre on three sites, spread over 600 acres in the villages of Tarluvada, Adavivaram and Rambilli. Google is co-developing the data centre with the Indian conglomerate Adani Group. Each family received $83,000 for their two acres.

Critics say the project has been pushed through at breakneck speed by local officials and the state's chief minister, Nara Chandrababu Naidu, with little thought into how the vast consumption of the servers would affect a region where water is already scarce. In Vizag, many neighbourhoods receive water for one hour in the morning and evening, which they store to use throughout the day. Campaigners say a one gigawatt data centre can consume more than 30 million litres of water a day. "A project of this kind makes no sense at all," said EAS Sarma, a former power secretary in the federal government and a fierce critic of the project.

For residents of the railway colony slum in the city, water is like gold dust. "If we run short, we have to order a water tanker," said Lakshmi, 45, who works as a maid. "The supply used to be for two hours but now it's one hour. It's just enough for our most basic needs."

Chandrababu Naidu, the chief minister, is determined to attract investment to his state. The plan is to create India's largest AI infrastructure hub within a 100km radius of Vizag. Multi-gigawatt projects will dot the coastline along the Bay of Bengal. According to government documents, the state is offering Google a 25 per cent discount on land prices, stamp duty exemptions, water and electricity subsidies, a 10 per cent capital subsidy on plant and machinery for ten years, and other waivers and incentives.

In February, the federal government under Narendra Modi laid out another perk for foreign cloud and AI service providers — no tax will be levied on revenues until 2047.

Sarma calls the Vizag project a "scandal". He said: "While New York state has imposed a moratorium on data centres because of rising power costs and water shortages, India is rolling out the red carpet."

VS Krishna of the Human Rights Forum in Vizag said: "No one even knows exactly how much water it will use because the memorandum of understanding with the government has not been made public."

Google has pledged to use green energy for 80 per cent of the project's needs. Google India said: "The AI Hub will use advanced air cooling to significantly reduce water usage. In addition, specifically for server and chip cooling, we will utilise advanced closed-loop liquid-to-air cooling technology that ... operates independently of the municipal potable water supply."

Sandhama Chandala says she came under pressure to sell her land in an area where water often flows for only two hours a day. Above, a protest against the Google data centre

JOHN SALANGSANG/SHUTTERSTOCK

Bumper day **The Hollywood actress Anne Hathaway, 43, who is expecting her third child, at the Los Angeles premiere of the sci-fi film The End of Oak Street**

More than 100 killed in Colombian earthquake

Stephen Gibbs Caracas

Colombia has declared a national emergency after a powerful 7.4 magnitude earthquake killed at least 111 people and caused damage across much of the west of the country.

The tremor, with an epicentre near the remote municipality of San José del Palmar, was felt across the country of 50 million people as well as in neighbouring Ecuador, Panama and even 750 miles east in the Venezuelan capital, Caracas.

The western province of Risaralda has reported the highest death toll, at 42. At least 27 deaths were reported in the western region of Valle del Cauca. The mayor of the central city of Pereira, Mauricio Salazar Peláez, said that there were at least 18 dead in his municipality.

Numbers are expected to rise as bodies are pulled from the rubble. Officials warned of possible aftershocks.

In the mountain-fringed city of Manizales, 20 houses were reported destroyed and at least two people killed. A tower of the city's neogothic cathedral collapsed and fell on the nave. At least six Colombian airports suffered serious damage. The president, Abelardo de la Espriella, who took office on Friday, said he was assuming direct control of the emergency response. He said: "The national government has all of its capabilities deployed to protect lives, assist affected communities and deliver aid wherever it is needed."

A tower of the cathedral in Manizales collapsed, as did at least 20 houses

Ukrainian drones kill 13 people in refinery raid

Russia At least 13 people, including a child, were killed and 39 injured in a Ukrainian drone attack on industrial and civilian targets in the city of Nizhnekamsk, about 500 miles east of Moscow. It was one of the heaviest civilian tolls in Russia in months. Ukraine's military said it had hit Tatneft's Taneco oil refinery in the Tatarstan region. Russia described the attack as terrorism and said Ukraine had struck residential areas. A period of mourning was declared.

In videos, smoke could be seen rising over the refinery, which was also hit by Ukraine in early June. It processed 17 million tonnes of crude oil in 2024. Ukraine has stepped up its strikes on Russian oil refineries in recent months in a campaign that has caused fuel shortages in many parts of the country, although the authorities say most of those problems have been resolved.

Ukraine says it wants to bring the price of Russia's war home to ordinary Russians. Moscow has imported fuel from overseas to bolster supplies. On Sunday, both sides accused each other of lethal attacks. Three people were killed and 37 wounded in a Russian attack on the eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, where an apartment block was hit, while the authorities in Russia's Belgorod said that five were killed and 25 wounded by a Ukrainian drone attack.

Typhoon brings floods

China Torrential rain caused by Typhoon Dolphin has flooded parts of eastern China including Shanghai, where 943 flights were cancelled yesterday, according to CCTV, the state broadcaster. The authorities warned that 74 rivers in the Taihu Lake basin and Zhejiang province had exceeded warning levels. The typhoon made landfall on Sunday and is forecast to move further inland.

Zuckerberg yacht denial

United States By the time the crew of a yacht owned by Mark Zuckerberg heard a radio call to help a boat off the coast of Alaska another ship had gone to its assistance, a Meta spokesman said. A passenger on the cruise ship that gave help had claimed Zuckerberg's crew had refused to respond. The Meta chief and his family were not on board at the time.

Billion-dollar Odyssey

United States Christopher Nolan's *The Odyssey* crossed the $1 billion (£741 million) threshold at the weekend, his first movie to reach that level since 2012's *The Dark Knight Rises* ($1.08 billion). It is the director's biggest box-office hit, also eclipsing 2009's *The Dark Knight* ($1 billion). *The Odyssey* has one major market left. It opens in China on Friday.

Sex doll confuses police

Australia A lifelike sex doll was mistaken for a murder victim after it was found in a suitcase in a rural area of New South Wales. Homicide detectives began an investigation after the discovery but the object was quickly found to be a doll with clothes, hair and a nose piercing, as well as markings resembling bruises and grazes, police said.

ALAMY; UFFIZI GALLERIES; ROBERTO SERRA/IGUANA PRESS/GETTY IMAGES

Tourists are being urged by Simone Verde, below, the Uffizi's director, to visit Palazzo Pitti, left and far left, where many more works are on display

Uffizi focuses on its phone-fixated fans

Florence's Uffizi Gallery is scrubbing hundreds of statues, beefing up lighting, opening new rooms and putting in more QR codes and fountains as part of a €50 million facelift to handle rising visitor numbers (Tom Kington writes).

The upgrade covers rooms featuring works including Botticelli's masterpieces *The Birth of Venus* and *Primavera*, as well as Palazzo Pitti, the palace across the Arno river that houses works by Caravaggio, Raphael and Tintoretto but is overshadowed by the better known Uffizi.

"Visitor numbers are increasing, so we need to distribute them better to see all these works," said the Uffizi's director, Simone Verde.

Managers at the museum already juggle ticket reservations to ease pressure on peak times. Visitors are expected reach a record 5.3 million a year — up from 4.4 million in 2019 — and are set to rise.

"We must react to a growth which reflects the success of the gallery but is also the fact there are fewer and fewer places in the world we can visit now due to global crisis," Verde told the Times.

A portion of the money has been spent on remedies such as better air-conditioning, new barriers to stop crowds jostling priceless works, more benches for tired visitors and a new orientation room at the entrance.

Verde said new descriptions next to paintings — including the Botticellis — were geared to visitors glued to their phones. "A third to a half of visitors are either looking at phones or taking photos to post. We can't stop that but we can turn phones into tools to help the visit by showing QR codes people can use to obtain descriptions, which are much better than complicated apps," he said.

Verde is pushing to get more visitors over the Arno to the opulent Palazzo Pitti, bought by the Medici family in 1549, seen as a precursor to the Palace of Versailles and later used by Italian royals.

Since 2024, visitors have been able to use the same route to the Palace from the Uffizi as the Medicis once used — a 16th-century rooftop corridor that passes over shops, apartments and the Ponte Vecchio bridge.

The 200,000 people using the Vasari corridor annually to arrive at Palazzo Pitti emerge to see where the rest of the Uffizi's €50 million upgrade cash is being spent. Royal apartments have been reopened after years of closure, rooms in the so-called Volteranno wing used by the Medicis have been restored and a fashion exhibit has been moved into unused top-floor space with sweeping views over Florence, freeing up room for more art.

"There are wall fabrics which only date back to 1911 and which are being replaced," said Verde. The palace's Palatine Gallery, which is home to 500 paintings including *Sleeping Cupid* by Caravaggio, will have new lighting. "We have fixed the reflections which meant you couldn't see the paintings well. The results will be spectacular," said Verde.

In the Boboli Gardens, which rise up behind the palace, 150 water jets in a fountain have been reactivated, and moss and pollution have been scrubbed off 200 sculptures. "We are boosting Palazzo Pitti's reputation to help spread visitors around. People should come and see it — it's totally different now," Verde said.

Rush to convert chateaux to luxury hotels 'slams door on living history'

France
David Chazan Paris

Ask a French aristocrat about inheriting a château and their noble brow will probably furrow. They might look across the lawn at the castle ramparts, peer at manicured grounds with lofty disdain and scowl at the acres of parkland that disappears off the horizon.

Then, in all probability, they'll bend your ear about the ruinous price tag of it all.

The upper crust on both sides of the Channel has long complained about the crippling maintenance bills, failing roofs, faulty wiring and hefty inheritance tax that comes with the title and house. In France, this is leaving many heirs with little choice but to sell the family seat.

The buyers are increasingly developers who convert these vast, fragile properties into luxury hotels, but conservationists say alterations for access, fire safety and modern comfort can strip châteaux of their historic character.

They also argue that hotel conversions shut ordinary visitors out of heritage sites that they believe should be open to the public.

Julien Lacaze, the head of Sites et Monuments, a heritage organisation, said: "Turning a château into a hotel means losing a bit of history. You have to partition galleries and salons that were designed as enfilades, suites of interconnecting rooms, and you have to install bathrooms for each room so the character of the place is altered."

Château de Mercuès in southwest France is now a hotel offering wine tourism

Conservationists say that the state should do more to help families keep their ancestral homes, for example by widening inheritance tax relief for certain protected historic monuments under specific conditions.

"We are for occupation by the traditional owners, with the château open to the public for a reasonable fee," Lacaze said. "When a château becomes a luxury hotel, staying there is beyond the reach of more modest visitors and if they just come for a drink at the bar, it's not the same as visiting a living château that's still the home of the family."

Developers say that they are careful to protect historic features when making alterations and must navigate a maze of strict regulations for the restoration of listed monuments. Changes must be approved by the Architectes des Bâtiments de France (ABF), state architects specialising in heritage buildings who work under the umbrella of the culture ministry.

La Maison du Val, near Paris, was originally a royal hunting lodge. It was rebuilt as a small château for Louis XIV in the 17th century, and is now a four-star hotel.

Matthieu Evrard, chief executive of Les Hôtels (Très) Particuliers, the group that bought the château, said the ABF had been particularly concerned about a cellar once used to store blocks of ice to preserve the king's food. "It was Louis XIV's icebox, you might say. The ABF asked me to give it prominence."

The château has 50 rooms, each costing about €360 a night.

An increasing number of châteaux and historic buildings are being turned into hotels or tourist accommodation. Among them are "maisons de campagne" near Paris, such as the Château de Villiers-le-Mahieu. More distant destinations include Château de Mercuès in the southwest and the Château de la Treyne, in the Dordogne.

"It's a good business model," Evrard said. "A museum needs 60,000 entries a year to break even, but a hotel can function throughout the year and people can come in and just have a drink."

The Pierres d'Histoire group operates hotels in heritage properties with the stated aim of saving and reviving neglected historic buildings.

Dominique Imbert, its founder and managing director, said he was inspired by Britain's Landmark Trust, a conservation charity that saves smaller buildings that are at risk but are too modest to interest larger bodies such as the National Trust.

Pierres d'Histoire has adopted this model at the Domaine de Courances. It has left the château untouched and still occupied by the de Ganay family, which has owned it for generations. "The ancillary buildings were in ruins," Imbert said. His company has restored them and the former mill, the old pump house and the farmhouse are self-catering holiday lets, while the château itself is open for public visits at set times.

"Some areas at the Château de Fleury were in the same state the Germans left them in after the war," he said. "They needed a lot of work."

Conservationists such as Lacaze approve of the handling of Courances. "The public still have access to the château, and the conversion of the annexes for tourists contributes to upkeep," he said. "It's a good thing."

ZOLTAN BALOGH/EPA-EFE/SHUTTERSTOCK; JOSEPH OKPAKO, JAVIER BRAGADO/GETTY IMAGES

Hungarians hope to be back on song

On an island in the Danube, nearly 100,000 music lovers a day will gather to dance to Florence + the Machine, Lewis Capaldi and Biffy Clyro, among others (Lili Rutai writes).

The Sziget festival in Budapest is one of the largest cultural events in Europe, but last year it came close to shutting after 30 years. This year's festival, which gets into full swing today, will be one of the first tests for Hungary's economy since Peter Magyar ended Viktor Orban's reign. After the April election, consumer sentiment and business confidence began growing, fuelled by Magyar's assurances that he would kickstart the economy, prosecute corruption and convince the EU to release £14 billion in frozen funds.

Fans at Sziget in 2024. This year's event stars Florence + The Machine and Biffy Clyro

"I am hopeful that there will be a strong change of direction now," said Karoly Gerendai, who co-founded and owns Sziget. He sold it in 2017, but bought it back last year.

Founded in 1993, the festival has grown into a key part of the cultural scene and a leading tourist attraction. Cancelling it would cost the economy more than £70 million, according to an economic research institute. "Yet we haven't received any state funding for more than eight years," said Tamas Kadar, its chief executive. He believes that in recent years the festival's support for LGBT rights in defiance of Orban's policies led state-owned companies to refuse to support it. "What I'm sensing now is that there's a better mood," Gerendai said.

In the second quarter of this year, GDP rose by 0.4 per cent, less than hoped.

Peter Virovacz, chief economist at ING Bank's Hungary branch, said: "Growth is growth, and the economy has been expanding for five quarters. After a period of stagnation, I think this is fine.

"Perhaps the real growth is yet to come," he added. "I still think we have cause for optimism."

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Democrat's 'badass' move to freeze eggs

United States
Joshua Thurston

Minutes before a live television interview in which she suggested she might one day run to be US president, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez was injecting herself with hormones.

"I think it's badass that I'm going to be giving myself shots in the green room, get my glam on, roll out, talk international events, domestic policy, elections, pop out, live my life, do my thing," she told her 9.6 million followers on Instagram.

The Democratic congresswoman, 36, was announcing that she intended to freeze her eggs, to "feel more in control of my life", and would share the process online.

Ocasio-Cortez — known as AOC — was the youngest woman to be elected to the US Congress in 2018, representing New York's 14th district.

She acknowledged that sharing such a personal decision was a "political risk" in a series of Instagram stories posted over the weekend. But her announcement has fuelled speculation that the representative for New York is positioning herself for a future presidential run.

"Usually, I keep my private life quite private, but I have made the decision to start freezing my eggs," Ocasio-Cortez said in a live-streamed video on Saturday night.

"There is very strangely a political risk, or a political tax, that comes with sharing this info," she said, before adding that her aim was "to show more depictions of women having full lives in every context and every choice".

She added: "As women in general, we are not taught about our bodies, we are not prepared for our own lives, whether that is in puberty, whether that is in pregnancy, whether that is in perimenopause, menopause, whether that is in so many different aspects of our lives."

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez admits a political risk in what she is doing

Her decision was quickly criticised by conservatives. Andrew Kolvet, the spokesman for Turning Point USA, said: "This is the message progressives spread when it comes to family formation and one of the reasons why fertility rates are cratering. Just freeze your eggs, kids! Pursue that career, even if you've been engaged for four years to a man you've known since college. AOC turns 37 in a few weeks so if she got pregnant tomorrow it would already be a geriatric pregnancy. This is not female 'liberation', it's a cautionary tale."

The lengthy egg-freezing process requires women to inject two to three hormone medications every day for about ten days, at least four pelvic ultrasounds, frequent blood-work panels and surgery to retrieve the mature eggs.

In the interview, Ocasio-Cortez said: "In this political environment where this administration is denying reproductive care to women across the country, from abortion rights to the ability to carry out a healthy pregnancy, I think it's important for us as leaders to have these conversations and share these processes, especially for working women across the country and normalise them."

Ocasio-Cortez's partner is Riley Roberts, who works in marketing. The couple have been together since meeting as students at Boston University and got engaged in Puerto Rico in 2022.

Ocasio-Cortez is a figurehead for the left of the Democratic Party and the Democratic Socialists of America, which has surged in popularity in recent primary races, before November's midterm elections.

When asked if she would run for president in the 2028 elections after being shown polling reflecting her popularity as a potential candidate, Ocasio-Cortez said: "I haven't ruled out the possibility."

She said she was "humbled" by the support and also did not rule out a possible run for the Senate seat held by the minority leader, Chuck Schumer, of New York.

More than 28,000 women in the US elected to freeze their eggs in 2023, according to the Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology, a national network of clinics.

Women opt to have the procedure for many reasons, including to preserve their eggs and ability to have children if they are undergoing chemotherapy or other treatments that could affect their fertility.

But many healthy women who are not ready to have children during their biologically prime reproductive years also use the process. Emilia Clarke, the *Game of Thrones* actress, and Vicky Pattison, the former reality TV star, are among those who have done so.

Business

WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)

FTSE 100
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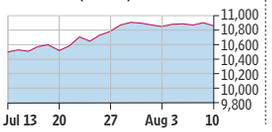

Dow Jones
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COMMODITIES

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Brent crude (6pm)
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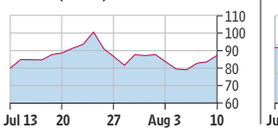

CURRENCIES

£/$
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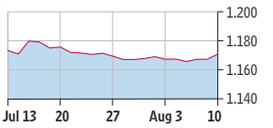
£/€
€1.1708 (+0.0037) ▲



Harvey Nichols says it could go under if no buyer comes to its rescue

Isabella Fish
Guy Taylor Retail Correspondent

Harvey Nichols has warned that it could collapse without a rescue deal, as Mike Ashley's Frasers Group closes in on the struggling department store chain.

The luxury retailer said in accounts filed this week that it would "cease trading" if it was unable to find a buyer and no additional funding was provided. No new financing had been agreed when the accounts were signed off on July 30.

The owner of Harvey Nichols, Sir Dickson Poon, put it up for sale in June and talks to sell all or parts of the company are at an advanced stage.

Frasers is the frontrunner to buy the business, as first reported by Sky News. Next, the FTSE 100 retailer that had entered takeover talks too, is said to still be involved in the process. A deal is expected to be announced imminently.

A source at one of Harvey Nichols's landlords said a takeover by Frasers would probably mean regional stores trade under the Flannels label, although Ashley has indicated an intention to leave the Harvey Nichols shop in Edinburgh, alongside the Knightsbridge flagship, untouched. The retailer has 13 shops globally, including seven locations in the UK and Ireland.

The business has struggled in recent years, resulting in heavy financial losses, due in part to fierce competition from online rivals.

Industry onlookers argue that the retailer had under-invested in its retail offering compared with rivals such as Harrods and Selfridges.

The company has not made a profit since the pandemic. Revenue fell to £184.8 million from £204.8 million in the year to the end of March 2025, while losses before tax widened to £49 million from £34 million. The gross margin improved from 44.1 to 45.7 per cent.

A Harvey Nichols spokeswoman said: "If a sale is not completed and if no additional funding is provided, the group will become a non-going concern. Hence, the accounts were filed on a non-going concern basis."

Frasers has built a reputation for acquiring distressed brands via "pre-pack" administrations — a process where a target firm briefly enters insolvency so Frasers can buy its assets without taking on its accumulated debts.

This strategy is controversial as shedding these liabilities leaves suppliers, landlords and creditors unpaid for debts of millions of pounds. Ashley's potential

Continued on page 29

John Lewis boss heads for the exit

Peter Ruis out after less than three years

Isabella Fish Retail Editor

The John Lewis boss who revived the retailer's "never knowingly undersold" pledge is exiting the department store chain after two and a half years.

The John Lewis Partnership, which also owns Waitrose, said Peter Ruis had decided to step down to "pursue new projects". He will leave on September 6.

Ruis, who has been managing director of the department store chain since January 2024, will be replaced by Will Kernan, a non-executive board member of the partnership.

Kernan, who is chairman of Neptune, an upmarket furniture retailer, has held several senior retail leadership positions over the past 35 years. He was chief executive of River Island, the White Company and Wiggle, and spent 13 years at New Look.

Kernan said: "Having served on the partnership's board for three years, I have a clear understanding of the John Lewis business and a huge appreciation for the partnership's values and employee-ownership model.

"We have significant headroom for growth and I'm looking forward to leading the team to ensure John Lewis remains the country's most trusted and loved retailer, in store and online."

Ruis rejoined John Lewis after working at the company from 2005 to 2013. He was given the job of leading the department store chain through the "next phase of its transformation" as it attempted to reverse falling sales.

John Lewis, which operates 34 department stores across the UK, has been undergoing a turnaround after struggling with online competition and falling high street demand.

Ruis spearheaded a major brand transformation by investing heavily in revamped beauty halls, reinstating the famous "never knowingly undersold" promise and bringing Topshop back to physical high-street retail through nationwide store partnerships.

This year the group issued a 2 per cent bonus to its 66,000 workers for the first time in four years.

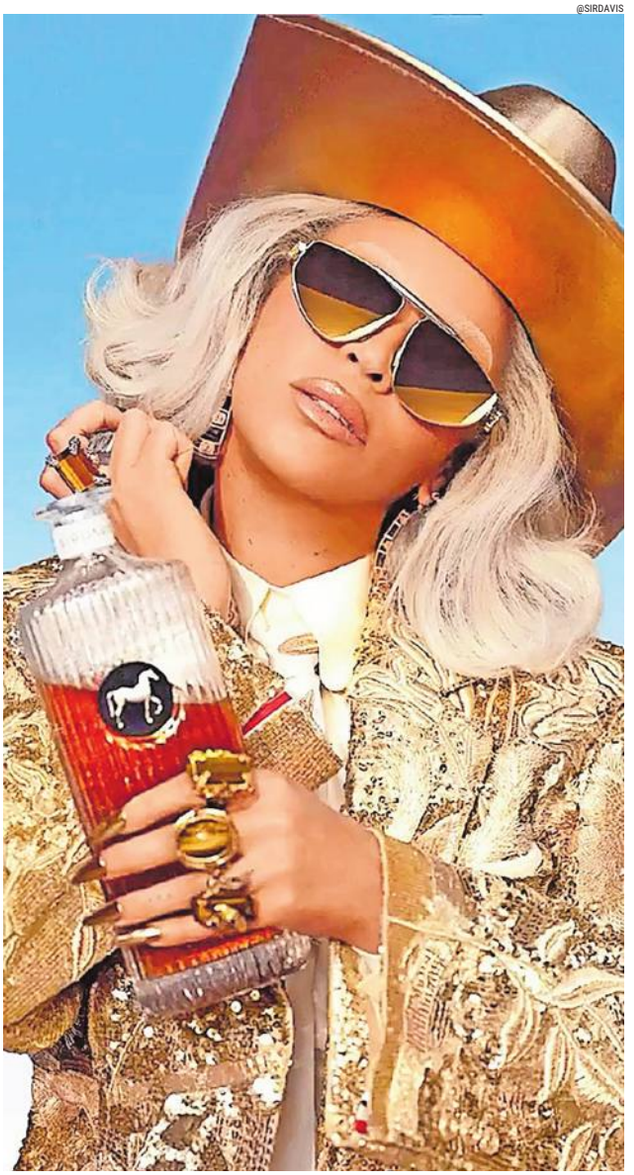
The employee-owned group posted a profit before tax and exceptional items of £134 million for the year to the end of January, up from £126 million a year earlier. However, it swung to a statutory loss before tax of £21 million, compared with a £97 million profit the previous year, after one-off charges including a writedown of old technology.

Sales rose 5 per cent to £13.4 billion. The bulk of the growth came from Waitrose, where sales climbed 7 per cent to £8.5 billion. The department store arm, John Lewis, reported sales growth of 3 per cent to £4.9 billion.

Last week the retailer warned profits would be squeezed by lower sales as it faces "really tough" trading conditions.

Ruis said: "After nearly three years of significant investment and modernisation, the business is now on a much stronger footing."

Jason Tarry, chairman of the partnership, said: "Peter has done a fantastic job and will be missed by all of our partners. He's injected energy and pace into the John Lewis transformation and we are sad to see him go."



Beyoncé's whiskey brand SirDavis, established with Moët Hennessy, was named after her great-grandfather, who was a "moonshiner" during the Prohibition era

Beyoncé takes full hit of whiskey

Jessica Newman
Leisure Industries Correspondent

Beyoncé has acquired full control of the whiskey brand she established two years ago with LVMH, the French luxury goods group.

The American singer collaborated with Moët Hennessy to create SirDavis in 2024. The whiskey is named after Beyoncé's great-grandfather Davis Hogue, who was a "moonshiner" in her home state of Texas during Prohibition.

LVMH confirmed recent reports that it has sold its stake in the venture but declined to provide further details regarding the transaction. Moët Hennessy is the wine and spirits division of LVMH that includes the whisky brands Ardbeg and Glenmorangie.

Beyoncé's whiskey, which won awards even before its release, was created with the expertise of Moët Hennessy's Bill Lumsden, a pioneer renowned for his work on Glenmorangie and Ardbeg. The Scot is a five-time International Whisky Competition master distiller of the year.

SirDavis, an American whiskey with Japanese and Scotch inspiration, features a mash bill of 51 per cent rye and 49 per cent barley and is finished, blended and bottled in Beyoncé's home town of Houston.

As well as wine and spirits, LVMH is the luxury powerhouse behind Louis Vuitton and Dior. The company was founded by the billionaire Bernard Arnault, who is France's richest person.

Beyoncé, a whiskey enthusiast, is one of a number of celebrities who have boosted their fortunes by developing, expanding and in some cases selling spirits brands, including her husband Jay-Z and Sir David Beckham.

In 2017 Diageo, the world's largest spirits group, spent $1 billion on Casamigos, the tequila brand co-founded by the actor George Clooney. The number of celebrity-backed tequilas has grown in recent years, with the model Kendall Jenner and actor Matthew McConaughey launching their own brands.

Business

Need to know

1 Thames Water has handed its chief financial officer a £1 million "sign-on" payment and reached retention agreements with about a dozen senior bosses, prompting renewed calls for the government to put the troubled company into special administration. Page 10

2 The John Lewis boss who revived the retailer's "never knowingly undersold" pledge is leaving after two and a half years. The John Lewis Partnership, which also owns Waitrose, said Peter Ruis was stepping down to "pursue new projects". Page 27

3 Harvey Nichols has warned that it could collapse without a rescue deal, as Mike Ashley's Frasers Group closes in on the department store chain. Page 27

4 Beyoncé has acquired full control of the whiskey brand she established two years ago with LVMH, the French luxury goods group. The American singer collaborated with Moët Hennessy to create SirDavis in 2024. The whiskey is named after Beyoncé's great-grandfather Davis Hogue, who was a "moonshiner" during Prohibition. Page 27

5 The Co-op's chairwoman, Debbie White, has stepped down with immediate effect after only two and a half years in the role, the latest in a growing list of senior departures from the mutual. Shirine Khoury-Haq left the company in March after four years as chief executive.

6 The final week of the World Cup helped to increase retail sales last month, although the summer heatwave kept consumers away from the high street, analysis suggests. Page 30

7 The financial betting giant Plus500 reported strong first-half results, with revenue up 12 per cent year-on-year, after launching its prediction markets in the United States to allow trading on the outcome of real-world events. Page 33

8 The defence technology group Cambridge Aerospace has raised $300 million at a $3.4 billion valuation, just two years after it was founded. Page 35

"A trade war between China and the European Union is looming

George Magnus, page 31

For expert business analysis subscribe to the business newsletter thetimes.com/newsletters

Rugby star set for €50m payday after drinks brand sale

A former professional rugby player is in line for a payday of about €50 million after selling the drinks business he founded to the maker of Vimto (Brian Carey writes).

Gary Lavin, who played for Leinster and Harlequins, has sold VitHit to the Aim-listed soft drinks maker Nichols for €75 million.

Lavin was recovering from a rugby injury when he came up with the idea for the low-calorie, low-sugar drink made from a blend of teas, juices, water and vitamins. It claims to give "100 per cent of the recommended daily allowance of eight vitamins".

After more than a quarter of a century building VitHit, Lavin has decided to step away from the running of the business following the sale to Nichols.

VitHit sells in 15 markets and generates more than €26 million in annual revenues. About 40 per cent of its sales are in the Republic of Ireland and another 40 per cent in the UK.

Lavin, who was chairman and owned more than 70 per cent of the business, said Nichols was "the ideal partner to support the next stage of the brand's development".

His brother Troy Lavin, VitHit's chief executive, will stay on for up to six months as the business integrates.

Nichols said VitHit was an "excellent strategic fit", strengthening its position within the "significant and growing" health and wellness corner of the

Co-op chairwoman quits as leadership shake-up widens

Guy Taylor Retail Correspondent

The Co-op's chairwoman, Debbie White, has stepped down with immediate effect after only two and a half years in the role, the latest in a growing list of senior departures from the mutual.

Her exit comes just a few months after the resignation of Shirine Khoury-Haq, who left the company in March after four years as chief executive.

The Co-op had faced allegations of a "toxic" executive culture, which it did not accept, and was suffering the fallout from a cyberattack in 2025 that cost it more than £200 million in lost revenues.

White, who became chair of the Co-op in February 2024, succeeding Allan Leighton, will be replaced on an interim basis by Moni Mannings, a senior independent director.

It means the company is on the hunt for a permanent chief executive and chair. Matt Hood, the managing director, also stepped down earlier this summer as part of a wider shake-up.

White said it had been a "privilege" to serve as chair during a period that has "brought both opportunity and challenge for our businesses", adding that the actions taken in response to the cyber-attack were having a "positive impact."

ANTHONY DEVLIN FOR THE TIMES

Shirine Khoury-Haq, former chief executive, left, and Debbie White have departed

"As our position strengthens, and with the process to appoint a permanent group chief executive under way, I feel it is the right time to step down as chair as I near the end of my first term on the board, as I am not in a position to commit to a further three-year term as chair at this time."

The Co-op, which remains one of the world's largest mutuals with more than 2,300 food shops and 800 funeral homes, reported annual pre-tax losses of £126 million for the latest financial year, down from a profit of £45 million in the previous year.

Then, in February, accusations surfaced of a "toxic culture" at executive level, with certain senior staff scared to raise concerns about the direction of the business in front of management. A letter to the board, reported by the BBC, alleged that "leadership behaviours have significantly degraded the leadership culture at the company".

Other sources highlighted sinking morale and abrupt departures, alongside a "sharp drop in profits and a rocketing of food waste".

The Co-op strongly defended its culture and leadership at the time. There have been some early signs of recovery in recent months from the lows of the cyberattack. The latest figures from Worldpanel by Numerator showed that sales rose by 5.6 per cent year-on-year to nearly £2 billion over the 12 weeks ending July 12, while market share also edged higher to 5.4 per cent.

White claimed the business was "back in a position of stability and opportunity", which had made her decision "easier".

Mannings, the retailer's interim chairwoman, said: "Debbie has provided unwavering commitment and valuable counsel to the Co-op during her time as chair. On behalf of the board, council, leadership team and colleagues across the Co-op, I would like to thank her for her significant contribution and wish her every success in the future."

BRYAN MEADE; INPHO; VITHIT

Gary Lavin founded VitHit after suffering a rugby injury; the brand has been sold to the Vimto maker Nichols

soft drinks market. The deal, funded through cash on Nichols's balance sheet, is expected to immediately enhance earnings.

Andrew Milne, chief executive of Nichols, said buying VitHit "is fully aligned with our long-term growth strategy" and he believes there is "significant headroom" to grow the brand.

Milne said his first priority was to start building VitHit's distribution across Nichols's existing customer base in the UK and to continue to develop the brand's formats, including its cans of sparkling soft drinks and multi-vitamin powders.

Analysts at Singer said the deal marked a significant shift for Nichols, adding that a "single-brand story just became two".

Vimto was invented in 1908 by John Noel Nichols, a wholesaler of herbs, spices and medicines, who saw an opportunity to market a herbal tonic that provided "vim and vigour". Today Vimto is sold in more than 60 countries and has been the unofficial drink to break the Ramadan fast in parts of the Middle East for more than a century. The sugar hit is all the greater because it is sold in a more concentrated form than in Britain.

Other Nichols licensed brands include Sunkist, Levi Roots and Slush Puppie.

In the past few years Nichols has set its sights on the more health-conscious consumer. In 2021 it teamed up with the THG-owned Myprotein and last year it announced a partnership with Applied Nutrition, the supplements business, which led to the rollout of Vimto-flavoured electrolyte tablets and energy gel.

In September Nichols plans to launch a new range of Vimto-flavoured protein waters with MyProtein.

The VitHit acquisition is expected to result in Nichols reaching its medium-term target to deliver annual revenues of at least £225 million earlier than forecast.

In the six months to the end of June, the company delivered sales of £89.5 million and a pre-tax profit of £15 million.

Growth was recorded across all of its markets, but Africa, where Nichols is localising production, was the best performing region with packaged sales up 17 per cent.

Shares in Nichols, which are up 11 per cent since the start of the year, produced another gain yesterday, up 20p, or 1.9 per cent, to £10.60.

Burnham 'may raise taxes by £25bn'

Chris Dorrell

Andy Burnham could raise taxes by as much as £25 billion in the autumn budget to fund his spending pledges, economists have warned.

Households would be likely to face the brunt of the higher tax burden, according to Capital Economics, with extra revenue going towards the defence budget and cost of living support.

"This tax-raising budget may be almost as big as the last, but with the balance tilted away from hikes on businesses seen in recent years towards tax hikes on capital, wealth and income," Ruth Gregory, deputy chief UK economist at Capital Economics, said.

"Some of the PM's more ambitious pledges may be delayed beyond this year's budget," she wrote in a research note. "If spending is to rise (perhaps by up to £30-40 billion) taxes will need to rise too (perhaps up to £20-25 billion)."

Since entering office in July, Burnham has promised to deliver the "biggest council housebuilding programme since the postwar period" and to increase defence spending to 3.5 per cent of GDP by 2035. He has also announced a range of smaller measures to support households struggling with cost of living pressures, such as a cap on bus fares and lower energy bills.

However, Burnham has said he will stand by the fiscal rules, which limit his ability to increase borrowing.

The new prime minister and John Healey, his chancellor, have also committed themselves to honouring Labour's manifesto pledge not to increase VAT, national insurance or income tax, which account for the majority of the tax take.

Burnham's team has been considering plans to increase capital gains tax, which is paid on profits made from shares, investments and some types of property, to help fund public spending.

Gregory said that Burnham may choose to delay some of the tax rises to avoid a large single hit to households' real incomes.

She estimated that if taxes were to rise by £25 billion, equal to about 0.8 per cent of GDP, then the tax burden would rise to a new high of 39 per cent of GDP.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

Harvey Nichols rescue

takeover of Harvey Nichols follows this exact model.

The retail tycoon, who owns Sports Direct, Flannels and Frasers, said he expected the retailer to be sold for less than £40 million. Poon bought Harvey Nichols for £53 million in 1991.

Sky News reported that a number of suppliers stocked at Harvey Nichols had raised serious concerns about getting paid under Frasers, citing their experiences during its brief previous ownership of MatchesFashion.

Fashion brands stocked in the department store chain include Armani Beauty, Balmain, Cartier, Juicy Couture, Lancôme, Max Mara and Nike.

Behind the story

Harvey Nichols's current woes are the result of a gradual loss of relevance rather than one single failure (Isabella Fish writes).

A brand once seen as synonymous with luxury fashion has been challenged by rivals that have invested more aggressively in their physical stores and online platforms.

Meanwhile, Harvey Nichols has admitted that it became less certain about its core customer, while its online operations did not keep pace with changing consumer expectations.

This was especially damaging as luxury shopping increasingly moved online and younger consumers became an important market.

Harvey Nichols appears to have been caught between the reputation it built in its 1990s heyday and the expectations of the modern luxury consumer.

Industry onlookers say its challenge is therefore to rediscover a clear customer proposition and invest quickly enough to make the brand relevant again.

Vistry's ex-boss has weak foundations

BUSINESS COMMENTARY *Ben Martin*

Greg Fitzgerald, the former boss of the FTSE 250 housebuilder Vistry, arguably has a track record of leaving behind companies with weaknesses in their foundations.

Take Galliford Try, the construction group he ran for about a decade until relinquishing executive duties in 2015.

True, when he set out his plan to stand down in 2014, Galliford was in good shape, with Fitzgerald having steered the builder through the 2008 house price crash and overseen a boom in profits. It was only after Fitzgerald left Galliford that a big problem that had its roots under his leadership became apparent, namely the ill-fated, £745 million fixed-price agreement in 2014 for its construction division to build the Aberdeen bypass along with Balfour Beatty and Carillion.

Granted, as Fitzgerald points out, Galliford's construction board and its Plc board signed off on the Aberdeen deal, as did Balfour and Carillion. It also took until 2017 for Galliford to sound a warning about the contract, after Fitzgerald had stepped down as non-executive chairman in November 2016.

Still, even Graham Prothero, who was Galliford's finance director at the time the Aberdeen bypass agreement was secured, would later reportedly describe it as a "mad" idea to build a 36-mile route for a fixed price. Indeed, the overall cost of the project would ultimately balloon above £1 billion thanks to a series of problems, including the 2018 collapse of Carillion, and result in financial hits for Galliford and Balfour.

A similar reversal of fortune has happened at Vistry, although this time the builder's problems began to materialise before Fitzgerald, 62, left earlier this year. As with Galliford, Fitzgerald looked to have pulled off a blinder at Vistry. Called Bovis Homes when he took charge in 2017, the builder was in trouble at the time he arrived, only for Fitzgerald to achieve a remarkable turnaround. He then won further plaudits in 2023 by announcing a shift in strategy to focus Vistry towards a "partnership" model that involved building properties for big institutional landlords and housing associations.

Yet a string of profit warnings in 2024, caused mainly by Vistry underestimating the cost of building some sites by £165 million, dealt a severe blow and its "partnership" approach was part of the problem. This was because Vistry mainly agrees fixed-price contracts with housing associations and build-to-rent players, meaning it couldn't pass on unexpectedly higher costs.

Throw in a warning about margins this March, when Fitzgerald also announced his plan to retire, and investors are becoming increasingly concerned about Vistry's finances, what with the builder shouldering average daily net debt of £799 million in the first-half of this year, against a stock market capitalisation of £791 million after its shares slumped by about 60 per cent in the last year.

Adam Daniels, Vistry's new chief executive, is focusing on cash generation, partly by discounting some houses to try to boost sales, but the moribund state of the wider property market presents a challenge.

In this context, it's unsurprising that investors yesterday took fright at reports that Allianz Trade was paring back credit insurance cover for Vistry's suppliers (report, page 31).

Vistry insisted that "credit insurers continue to provide substantial cover for our supply chain" and that it is "not aware of any supplier withdrawing trade from Vistry due to credit insurance changes". Still, the worry among investors is that if an insurer ends up pulling cover, suppliers to Vistry will seek payment from the builder upfront, further stretching its cash flow. And while Vistry has in recent months sought to allay shareholder concerns that it may be forced to tap them for cash, nervousness about the position of credit insurers will add to investor unease.

A cash call by Vistry would draw another parallel with Galliford, which in the end raised £150 million from a rights issue in 2018 to cover the Aberdeen bypass cost overruns and strengthen its brickwork.

Thames's fast Buck

Andy Burnham's government may well decide that temporary nationalisation via a special administration regime (SAR) is the answer for Thames Water, given the utility is sinking under the weight of about £20 billion of debt and its liquidity is seeping away. But would an SAR resolve the thorny topic of executive pay at the troubled company?

True, the revelation yesterday that sewage-spilling Thames last month paid a deferred £1 million signing-on fee to Steve Buck, after he joined as its finance chief last year, leaves a very bad smell (report, page 10). So do all the other payment structures that different utilities have recently adopted that allow them to counter rules introduced last year that enable Ofwat, the water industry regulator, to ban executive bonuses if serious environmental incidents or other failings occur at the companies they run.

Campaigners have used the disclosure of the £1 million for Buck to renew their calls for Thames to be placed in an SAR. But as Sir Adrian Montague, the Thames chairman, has argued in a letter to Alistair Carmichael, the chairman of the Commons environment, food and rural affairs committee, the troubled utility faces recruitment and retention "pressures" that are "a function of the company's circumstances and would persist in special administration or in a nationalisation". Montague added: "The special administrator, or the government as the case may be, would therefore also need to address them through additional payments to retain, recruit and motivate those needed to operate and turn around the company."

The contentious issue of executive pay would simply become someone else's problem.

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Business

‘Burnham bounce’ propels consumer confidence to two-year high

Jack Barnett

Economic confidence has risen to its highest level in nearly two years in the latest sign of a “bounce” in consumer sentiment under Andy Burnham.

Barclays’ consumer sentiment index climbed to 30 per cent in July, a 21-month high and up by six percentage points compared with the previous month. It measures confidence in the UK economy.

Expectations for household finances and job security both improved in July

The bank’s figures came after GfK’s long-running consumer confidence index rose by the quickest pace in nearly three years over the same period.

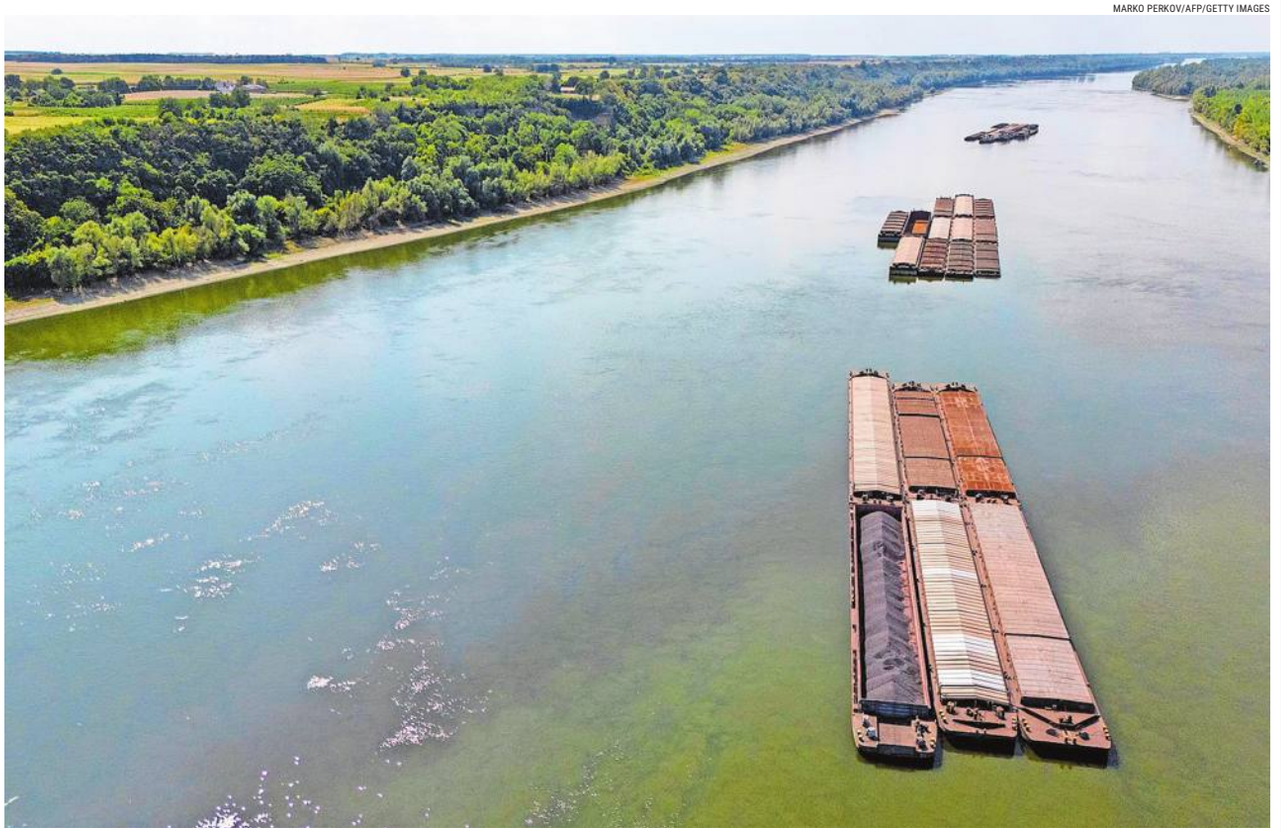
Barclays also said that card spending rose by 2 per cent on an annual basis in July, a slight increase from June’s gain of 1.9 per cent. The football World Cup and record hot weather drove up demand, the bank said.

Confidence in job security and household finances both improved over the month, which covered the period in which Burnham succeeded Sir Keir Starmer as prime minister.

Rohan Kumar, head of client insights at Barclays, said: “Card spending strengthened further in July, reaching its highest level for 12 months, with both essential and non-essential spend remaining in growth.

“Multiple factors played a part, with UK staycations, continued warm weather and England’s World Cup run lifting spending on travel, hospitality, everyday essentials and seasonal retail categories.”

MARKO PERKOV/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Rivers run dry Cargo vessels on a stretch of the Danube near Sarengrad, Croatia, lie stranded because of low water levels. Commercial shipping on a key section of the Rhine near Koblenz also risks coming to a halt because of the drought. Road haulage restrictions have been lifted in several German states to ease bottlenecks

Too hot to shop: retail sales inch higher but heat takes toll

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

The final week of the World Cup helped to increase retail sales last month, although the summer heatwave kept consumers away from the high street, analysis suggests.

Figures from the British Retail Consortium and KPMG, the consultancy group, showed that retail sales rose 1.3 per cent in July compared with the same month last year.

Despite the year-on-year increase, the rate of annual sales growth dropped from 1.9 per cent in June. July’s increase was also below the six-month average of 1.8 per cent.

Analysts said that spending habits were influenced by the final week of the World Cup in July, especially in alcohol and snacks.

However, there was a lack of demand for non-essential products over the month, they added.

Helen Dickinson, chief executive of the retail consortium, said: “July saw modest sales growth, with food sales boosted by the final week of the World Cup. Non-food sales were hit by the decline in footfall as shoppers avoided the heat. Clothing was a bright spot, driven by demand for affordable summer essentials, while footwear struggled to keep up.” She added: “Shoppers also prioritised smaller indulgences such as beauty products and fashion jewellery, while delaying bigger-ticket purchases including furniture and computing.”

The sweltering weather hit sales of non-food items, apart from clothing

Linda Ellett, UK head of consumer, retail and leisure at KPMG, said: “The prolonged warm weather has aided home entertaining and garden-related purchases and, coupled with England’s progress to the tail-end of the World Cup, brought a boost to food and drink sales in July.”

The British Retail Consortium and KPMG estimated that food purchases increased by 3.8 per cent annually last month compared with an increase of 2.8 per cent in the previous month. Non-food purchases, which include clothes and electronics, dropped by 0.7 per cent.

The retail sales figures come after a series of encouraging economic statistics in recent weeks. GfK’s long-running consumer confidence index climbed at the fastest monthly pace in nearly three years, while inflation fell faster than expected to 2.6 per cent annually in June and the economy returned to growth in May. A survey of the labour market found that permanent hiring did not contract for the first time since Liz Truss’s premiership nearly four years ago.

The Bank of England opted to leave interest rates unchanged at 3.75 per cent at its latest monetary policy committee meeting in July.

Rising confidence is typically associated with a revival in consumer spending. The improvement in GfK’s index, which started in the 1970s, coincided with Andy Burnham succeeding Sir Keir Starmer as prime minister, leading some analysts to claim the UK had undergone an economic “Burnham bounce”.

Data due to be published on Thursday by the Office for National Statistics is expected to show that gross domestic product contracted by 0.1 per cent in June. The Bank of England expects output to flatline in the three months to September.

The ONS’s latest estimate for monthly retail sales in Britain suggests they increased by 1 per cent in June.

French bank licence sets Revolut on hiring spree

Jack Barnett

Revolut is planning to hire 600 new employees in western Europe, with the majority taking up posts in France after the challenger bank secured a banking licence there.

The recruitment plans come after Revolut, which is based in London, said that it would make France its “western Europe HQ”. It has already pledged to spend $1.1 billion on its French expansion plans.

About 400 of the 600 new staff will be based in France. The banking licence in France is granted by the ACPR, a banking regulator, and the European Central Bank.

Revolut has been able to provide banking services in the European Union via a “passporting” scheme using its Lithuanian licence, which it secured in 2018. It will now be able to offer products more tailored to French borrowers.

Nik Storonsky, Revolut’s founder and chief executive, said: “France has become a leading financial hub, supported by a dynamic financial ecosystem and a robust regulatory framework.

“It is the ideal platform to accelerate Revolut’s next phase of growth — bringing us one step closer to our ambition of becoming one of Europe’s largest and most trusted banks.”

$1.1bn

Spending pledged by the challenger bank on expansion in France

Source: Revolut

The Financial Times has previously reported that the ECB imposed growth restrictions on Revolut that would dictate how it releases certain products. The central bank was quoted as saying that Revolut had “deficiencies” in its risk controls.

Customers in France will be moved to the French entity first, followed by Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain, Revolut said. The digital-only lender has more than 75 million customers but no physical bank branches.

As a signal of its intention to make France its European base, Revolut has hired the former chief executive of Société Générale, Frédéric Oudéa, as its western Europe chairman and has signed a decade lease in Paris.

The decision comes after European-focused banks shifted workers out of London to the Continent following the 2016 Brexit vote. UK regulators granted Revolut a banking licence in March. Rachel Reeves, when she was chancellor, tried to set up a meeting between Revolut and the UK’s financial watchdogs only for her efforts to be stymied by Andrew Bailey, governor of the Bank of England.

George Magnus

Why China's booming technology sector won't save its real economy

There is no such thing as "the" Chinese economy. There are, in fact, two economies. One comprises the modern, dynamic manufacturing sector that features constantly in tech coverage and over which people fawn for often different reasons. This economy is about China's successful electric vehicle, battery and solar/wind manufacturing, other products and processes and, of course, artificial intelligence.

In July Moonshot AI released its Kimi K3 frontier model to wide acclaim, and gasps in Silicon Valley. In AI models, if not in hardware, raw compute or chipmaking, China is still on track to catch up with its American counterparts. AI investment is also, as in the US, one of the main contributors to whatever Chinese GDP growth is.

China's so-called strategic emerging industries, long nurtured and supported by the party-state, now feature several world-class products and global brands. They reveal that in industrial policy, China's very large bet is paying off in terms of output, dynamism and reputation, even if not consistently with regards to productivity and commercial viability.

The other economy is the other 85 to 90 per cent of GDP, which grabbed the headlines when Covid-19 ravaged the world and while Chinese property was in freefall, but is now often sidelined in favour of the more exciting industrial stories. It shouldn't be.

This summer it was again centre stage as China's official (but probably exaggerated) GDP for the second quarter revealed a lower-than-expected 4.3 per cent annual growth rate, after 5 per cent in the first quarter. The quarter-on-quarter growth rate of 0.9 per cent was one of the weakest on record.

In short, China's property sector is now in its fifth year of contraction. New home prices in some large urban agglomerations such as Beijing and Shanghai are starting to stabilise, but elsewhere the story is still grim. The labour market is predominantly low skill and low wage. Consumption gets support in rhetoric but not that much in renminbi. China's high debt burden (more than 300 per cent of GDP) and unemployment, stalled productivity growth and overproduction have become common features. Behind all this lurk pronounced fiscal and financial sector weaknesses.

LONG WEI/FEATURE CHINA/FUTURE/GETTY IMAGES

In July Moonshot AI showcased its acclaimed Kimi K3 frontier model in Shanghai

Chinese exports, though, have been doing well. Yet this isn't good news either. Net trade accounted for perhaps as much as a third of total GDP growth last year — extraordinary for a $20 trillion economy. This speaks to China's unique fusion of industrial and trade policies. The trade surplus of more than $1.2 trillion is likely to be repeated this year. This is not about comparative advantage and efficiency, but about repressed household demand, an undervalued currency, the unprecedented support of industrial policy measures and the political drive for self-reliance.

China's export volumes have grown by about 40 per cent since 2019, but import volumes are almost unchanged. So much for the oft-heard politician's quip of China being the world's growth engine.

China's two economies exist, of course, in the same space. Yet one is all about too much supply and excess capacity — a charge the ministry of commerce has vigorously denied in a recently published paper in favour of foreign petulance. The other is all about inadequate demand, and the persistent need by Beijing and local governments to stimulate the economy every year. The July politburo meeting read-out seems to suggest that more is on the way. The irony is that it is the same set of industrial and other policies that is producing this dichotomy.

The National Development and Reform Commission summed it up, unintentionally, to the National People's Congress in March this year. It echoed the self-congratulatory manufacturing and tech bullishness of President Xi, other leaders, and the newly announced 15th five-year plan.

Yet it also wrote the more rueful comment that: "The imbalance between strong supply and weak demand is acute; real-estate development investment continues to decline; infrastructure investment growth has turned from positive to negative; manufacturing investment growth has slowed further; overall investment faces mounting downward pressure; consumption growth lacks momentum; and the price level continues to run low."

Unsurprisingly, there was no commentary in the Chinese state media about this, but the commission is right. The economic growth model, strategy and policies that are triggering pride over a vibrant manufacturing sector that is serially checking boxes on low prices and innovation are precisely the same ones that are delivering lacklustre consumption, including of housing and vehicles, and now also a reported slump in private investment (including property).

Early indicators of activity for July were not good. Typhoons may have affected industry and construction, and the government may conceivably act this year to provide further stimulus so as to hit the year's growth target of 4.5 to 5 per cent.

The government will also be banking on exports, but there are limits here. A trade war between China and the European Union is looming, not least because China's self-reliance and industrial policies have caused its export structure to resemble increasingly that of many EU nations.

This has squeezed EU firms — German especially — at home, in China and in third markets. Trade pushback from countries as diverse as India, Indonesia, Brazil and Turkey is also on the rise as they too begin to react to the threat to their own industrialisation from waves of cheap Chinese goods imports.

China's fundamental problem is how to resolve the dichotomy between the small but dynamic manufacturing sector, and the much larger rest of the economy, which presents with unsustainable debt levels and debt capacity limits, misallocated capital, weak demand and employment, overproduction, and fiscal and financial weaknesses. Actual economic growth may be no higher than 2 to 2.5 per cent. No matter how good Chinese industrial firms are, they are not going to solve these problems. Only extensive reforms and resource transfers can. The government hasn't the will, and time is not infinite.

George Magnus is a research associate at the University of Oxford's China Centre and SOAS University of London, and a former chief economist at UBS

Vistry shares drop again after credit cover pulled

Tom Howard Property Correspondent

Vistry's battered share price fell once again yesterday after it emerged that a credit insurer had cut the cover it extended to the developer's supply chain, putting more pressure on its finances.

Last week Travis Perkins, the builders' merchant, said during its half-year earnings call that credit insurance had been pulled from a "fairly significant national housebuilder". The rumour was that the unnamed company was Vistry and the Financial Times reported that Allianz Trade had adjusted its credit limits for Vistry's suppliers.

Suppliers can buy credit insurance to protect themselves if a customer fails to pay for goods and services. When coverage is withdrawn, they may demand payment upfront.

Stephen Rawlinson, an analyst, said the "lack of such insurance is clearly seriously unhelpful", although he added that if it was hampering Vistry's trading the company "would have said so".

A Vistry spokesman said there had been "no interruptions to our supply chain". He added: "We are not aware of any supplier withdrawing trade ... due to credit insurance changes. Credit insurers continue to provide substantial cover for our supply chain, which more than meets the group's requirements."

Vistry shares, which had already halved so far in 2026, dropped a further 34½p, or 12.2 per cent, to 249p yesterday.

The housebuilder has been in recovery mode since the end of 2024, when it admitted to underestimating the cost of building out nine sites in southern England by £165 million. Greg Fitzgerald, its previous chief executive, had pivoted the business towards a "partnerships" model, building homes for housing associations and institutional landlords such as Blackstone, but institutional demand has quietened amid economic uncertainty, while housing associations have been waiting for their next round of government funding.

Adam Daniels, the new chief executive, has sought to strengthen the balance sheet by selling land to other developers and cutting house prices. Vistry is still publicly targeting a net cash position — more cash than loans outstanding — "in excess of" £100 million by the end of this year, having averaged net debt of £799 million in the first half.

Should it have to start paying upfront for materials, or suppliers increase prices to cover higher insurance premiums, that is likely to make Vistry's net cash promise even harder to deliver.

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Business

Kospi chaos: 'The country has turned into a casino'

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

In their book, *Boom and Bust: A Global History of Financial Bubbles*, William Quinn and John Turner propose that bubbles tend to form when three developments have taken place: increased retail participation in a market after improved access to buy and sell a particular asset, a sharp rise in lending by banks to finance such wider participation and, lastly and perhaps most importantly, speculative fervour.

Quinn and Turner believe that bubbles have the same creation process as fire: participation provides the oxygen, credit provides the fuel and speculation provides the heat. The spark tends to be the creation of a new technology or the introduction of new government policy.

The day-to-day double-digit gyrations in the value of the Kospi, South Korea's primary stock index, certainly share similarities with Quinn and Turner's description.

On July 31 the Kospi logged its largest one-day gain of 18 per cent. Two days earlier it had fallen by 12.6 per cent, triggering an intraday trading halt of 20 minutes.

"The country has turned into a casino," Lee Jongwook, an opposition policymaker, said in a recent parliamentary hearing.

Domestic retail investors and foreign capital have poured into South Korea's equity markets in recent years. Leverage has spread throughout the market via newly introduced complicated investment vehicles and market participants, like everywhere, have been making wild bets on the future earnings potential of companies exposed to the artificial intelligence boom, pushing the Kospi sharply higher.

However, the positive benefits that these catalysts provided over the past 18 months are heading into reverse, triggering wild daily market moves.

The Kospi is home to companies that are at the technological and AI frontier, and two names take the limelight: SK Hynix and Samsung Electronics, both linchpins in the global chipmaking industry.

Such has been their ascent over the past year that they make up about 60 per cent of the index's entire market cap, illustrating just how much hope investors have placed in the AI ecosystem to make them money and how closely tied the Kospi's fortunes are to these titans. Wall Street's S&P 500 has similarly become concentrated in AI-linked stocks, but to a lesser degree.

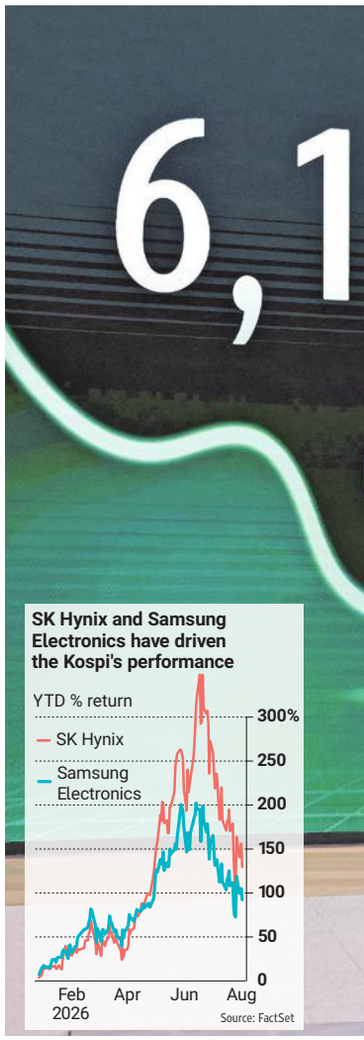
The Kospi's meteoric rise would not have been possible without these chipmaking behemoths, which have been dubbed the "twin towers" of the index. The pair have ridden the AI trade over the past year owing to their importance to the introduction of AI infrastructure around the globe, much like America's Nvidia and Taiwan's TSMC.

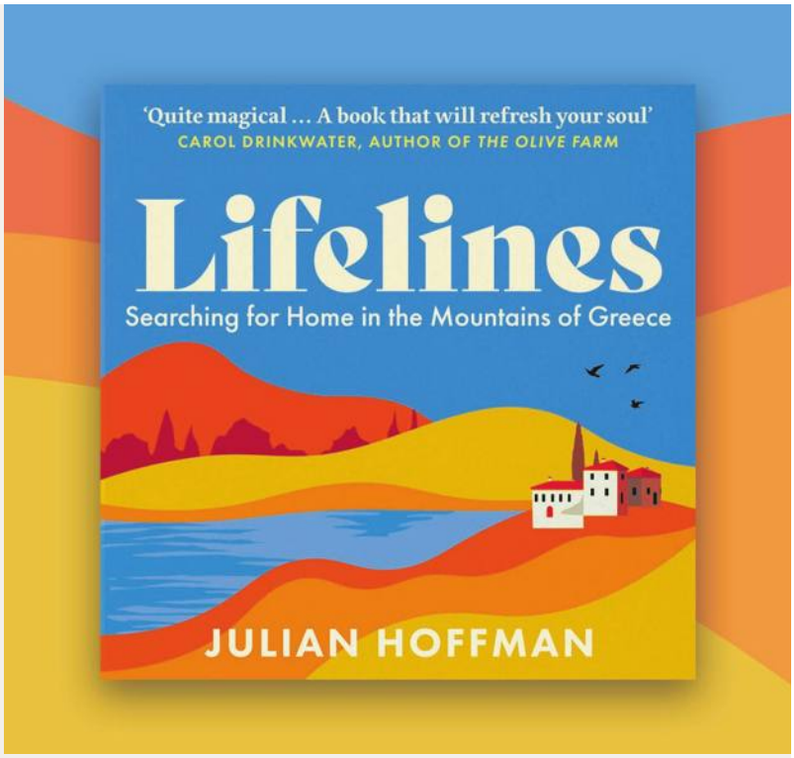
At their peak, shares in SK Hynix and Samsung were, respectively, up 348 per cent and 200 per cent since the beginning of the year. Recent falls have tempered those gains, but they are still up 130 per cent and 92 per cent apiece.

Although the Kospi suffered the largest drop among the world's largest stock indexes last month, it still boasts the best year-to-date return at about 50 per cent. It also claimed that accolade across the 2025 calendar year.

The index's wild rollercoaster ride of the past couple of years has been a source of lively debate on popular investor chat sites.

One Reddit user, who goes by the username "No_Mercy_4_Potatoes", said in response to just one of a handful of double-digit rises in the index at the end of July: "Never seen an index act like [a] penny stock before". Another, under the username of Macaron-No5646, said: "We had meme stocks, now we have meme stock markets."





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Serica pulls out of bidding war for Pharos — for now

Emily Gosden Energy Editor

Serica Energy, the North Sea oil producer, has said it will not raise its offer for Pharos Energy after being outbid by £700,000 for what would have been its first international acquisition.

Pharos, which is listed in London and has assets in Egypt and Vietnam, agreed a £124.3 million deal to be taken over by Israel's Ratio Petroleum Energy in June. Serica gatecrashed that deal last month, with an offer worth £145.7 million.

However, on Friday Pharos said that Ratio had returned with a sweetened £146.4 million offer, and the board has now switched its support back to Ratio. The deal is worth 33.75p per Pharos share in cash and dividends, a premium of 29.2 per cent to the closing price the day before the original deal was announced.

Serica said yesterday that the terms of its offer were final and would not be increased. "Serica retains a highly disciplined approach to M&A," it said. Serica reserved the right to increase its offer if a third party other than Ratio entered the fray.

Chris Cox, Serica's chief executive, had previously described the acquisition of Pharos as "a compelling opportunity to deliver a first step in our long-standing strategic objective of adding to the diversification of our business through international expansion".

Analysts at Panmure Liberum said: "Given that there is no certainty that Ratio will be able to secure the financing (as it needs to raise equity and secure debt) to complete the deal, it is possible that Serica may still have an opportunity to acquire Pharos if Ratio fail to get the money together."

Shares in Pharos closed down 2¼p, or 6.9 per cent, at 31¼p last night, below Ratio's offer price. Serica rose 9¾p, or 4.3 per cent, to close at 239½p.

JUNG YEON-JE /AFP/GETTY IMAGES;JEON HEON-KYUN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The Kospi, South Korea's stock market, has been gripped by sharp daily swings

Although the Kospi's rally has been turbocharged by SK Hynix and Samsung, its origins lie in an overhaul to South Korea's corporate governance code enacted last year that, primarily, diluted the power of large shareholders in the country's family-owned industrial champions, known as chaebols, and ensured that company directors have a fiduciary duty to all shareholders rather than just the big ones.

Interest in the country's stock market took off after the market reforms, which were designed to eliminate the "Korea discount".

Udith Sikand, senior emerging markets analyst at Gavekal Research, said: "The initial stages of the rally were driven by improving macro fundamentals, cheap valuations and reduced policy uncertainty."

Naturally, this blistering rally piqued the interest of ordinary South Koreans who wanted to piggyback on it to share in the spoils.

A tactic used by traders to magnify their profits is to invest in a publicly listed fund that tracks the performance of a specific stock or a collection of stocks, but which also uses borrowed money to multiply any returns made by the underlying equities. These vehicles are called "leveraged exchange-traded funds" (ETFs) and, up until May this year, they did not exist in South Korea. Several were launched that month, mostly following the share price movements of SK Hynix and Samsung.

The South Korean government realised that domestic investors, keen to participate in the Kospi's rally, were simply buying leveraged ETFs via overseas exchanges. To counteract this, they encouraged their usage at home to prevent money flowing abroad.

Leveraged ETFs are great when everything is going up because they can double, triple or even quadruple returns to investors, which South Koreans hoped to achieve — about $10 billion has, on net, flowed into these instruments since they launched.

Sikand said: "The more recent frenzy is largely the result of excess leverage (both at home and abroad) finding its way into pushing up stock prices."

Leveraged ETFs are terrible when everything is going down because they magnify losses, which can lead to forced selling and bring an overall stock market lower.

A global sell-off in tech shares, which started about late June but has since eased up, hit Korean retail investors hard, leaving them facing margin calls on leveraged positions, prompting further selling. Money managers also trimmed exposure to the Kospi and booked profits in South Korean equities in general after the rally resulted in their portfolios being too overweight on the country.

60%

Combined share of the Kospi's market value held by Samsung and SK Hynix

Source: Korea Composite Stock Price Index

Lee Jae Myung, the country's president and a self-proclaimed investor, has suffered a sharp fall in his approval ratings since the Kospi fell about 40 per cent from its peak in June. Many blame his administration for fuelling the market frenzy.

Analysts believe that the Kospi's daily gyrations are down to the launch of these new ETF products — the wildest swings started shortly after their introduction. Sean Darby, an equity strategist at Mizuho, the Japanese investment bank, said: "A proliferation in leveraged ETFs and strong retail activity meant that speculative forces overwhelmed fundamentals." Cindy Park, head of Korea equity research at Nomura, also a Japanese investment bank, said: "Forced selling has also contributed to market volatility through a self-reinforcing deleveraging cycle."

South Korean authorities have clamped down on leveraged ETFs, months after they championed them, by preventing new listings and raising the minimum deposit required to invest. A 20 per cent cap on how much of an individual's portfolio can be invested in these products was also introduced. Darby said: "This has helped prick the bubble to allow share prices to reflect fundamentals."

Park thinks there is more red tape to come. She said: "We believe key policy developments in the second half of the year may include tighter regulations of single stock-leveraged ETFs."

These corrective measures should help dampen the wild daily movements — but, ultimately, the high concentration of South Korea's blue-chip index in SK Hynix and Samsung means that its fortunes are closely tied to global investor sentiment towards the AI trade, which has itself been very choppy this year.

Quinn and Turner claim that not all bubbles are economically and socially harmful. Just look at the British railway mania of the mid-1800s that revolutionised travel, and the dotcom bubble, which engineered the rollout of the internet.

Time will tell whether the AI trade ends up scorching everything in its path.

Plus500 bet on US expansion pays off

Charlotte Bend

The financial betting giant Plus500 reported strong first-half results after launching its prediction markets in the United States to allow trading on the outcome of real-world events.

Revenue for the FTSE 250 fintech group reached a three-year high, up 12 per cent year-on-year to $462.9 million, lifted by income from trading that offset a fall in global interest rates.

Plus500 said its move into the prediction markets sector in February, followed by sporting events in June as the World Cup got into full swing, was set to generate annualised turnover from the division of about $140 million.

A 17 per cent increase in new customers set the foundation for a five-year high for customer income. Profit before tax was up from $181.8 million to $183.2 million year-on-year in the six months to June 30.

Shares of Plus500 rose 80p, or 2.1 per cent to £38.36.

The group kept its annual earnings and revenues outlook unchanged, after a number of upgrades this year.

The company launched its prediction markets business in the US this year

David Zruia, Plus500 chief executive, described the period as "outstanding" as the company continued its transformation from a single-products business to a "diversified global multi-asset" group.

It expanded its over-the-counter (OTC) operations to Canada, through the online investment management service Wealthsimple, and Latin America via the region's leading financial market provider, Nelogica.

Its non-OTC business, which includes the new prediction markets and sports contracts, delivered revenue growth of about 30 per cent year-on-year. Analysts at Cavendish said this performance boded "extremely well" for the future.

The company announced $182.5 million in shareholder returns, about 20 per cent ahead of the forecast. This comprised $100 million in share buybacks and $82.5 million in dividends, bringing total returns since its float to approximately $3.1 billion.

Plus500 made its London debut on Aim in 2013 before upgrading to the main market in 2018.

The company, which is based in Israel, has customers in more than 60 countries, with its main market presence in the UK and the rest of Europe, Australia, the United States and the Middle East.

Marshalls paves its way to profit despite dip in sales

Charlotte Bend

Cost-cutting at a London-listed landscaping and roofing products supplier helped it to weather a dip in first-half revenue, with a healthy rise in pre-tax profit.

Marshalls said it had enjoyed a recovery in its landscaping products unit, which had been under pressure from falling demand for maintenance work as well as a rise in competition.

This helped the company's adjusted pre-tax profit to rise 13.2 per cent to £24.9 million in the period ended June 30, reflecting an increase in operating profit and lower financial expenses. The adjustments related to an acquisition and a restructuring exercise.

Underlying pre-tax profits rose by 68.4 per cent compared with the same period a year ago, to £19.7 million.

As Britain grapples with contracting residential and commercial construction due to rising inflation and higher raw material prices, Marshalls has been exiting unprofitable operations and adjusting its manufacturing capacity to shore up profitability.

Cost-cutting helped to offset weaker demand at the landscaping supplier

Business

The Times unit trust information service

ALLIANZ GLOBAL INVESTORS

Inv Serv: 020 7065 1400 Helpline: 0800 317 573

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Strategic Bond Fund ‡	130.44		+0.01	8.08
UK Equity A ‡	401.77		-0.77	3.93
UK Growth ‡	10460.72		+15.89	2.21

ARTEMIS FUND MGRS

0800 092 2051

Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Income Fund R Acc ‡	380.22		-0.76	...
Global Income Fund R Inc ‡	213.81		-0.43	...
Global Select Fund R ‡	227.42		-0.13	...
High Income Fund R Inc ‡	67.02		-1.03	...
Income Fund R Acc ‡	814.24		-6.43	...
Income Fund R Inc ‡	312.08		-2.47	...
Monthly Dist & R Inc ‡	92.06		-0.06	...
SmartGarp Eurp Equity R ‡	900.69		-3.56	...
SmartGarp Global Equity R ‡	689.23		+0.33	...
SmartGarp UK Equity R ‡	4286.46		-8.55	...
Strategic Assets R Acc ‡	94.32		+0.1	...
Strategic Bd R M Acc ‡	116.57		+0.14	...
Strategic Bd R M Inc ‡	52.7		+0.07	...
Strategic Bd R Q Acc ‡	116.37		+0.15	...
Strategic Bd R Q Inc ‡	52.57		+0.07	...
UK Select R Acc ‡	1351.49		-2.75	...
Uk Smaller Cos R Acc ‡	2378.33		+8.74	...
UK Special Sits R Acc ‡	1111.71		-2.86	...

AXA FRAMLINGTON UNIT MGMT

Dling: 0845 602 1952 Priv Clients:0845 777 5511

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Health ‡	3362		+37.00	...
UK Select Opps Inc ‡	2169		-10.00	1.10
UK Sml Cos Inc ‡	332.7		+2.50	0.37
UK Sust Eqty R Dis ‡	240		-1.10	1.10

AXA FUND MANAGERS

Admin & Enq 0117 989 0808

UK/Global Investment Companies

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Gwth Acc R ‡	288.1		...	0.52
Japan Acc A ‡	162.3		...	1.51

CIS UNIT MANAGERS

08457 46 46 46

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Growth ‡	299.50		...	1.14
Sus Leaders ‡	1040		-0.48	1.47
UK Growth ‡@	883.90		...	1.69
UK Income ‡@	259.90		...	3.83

CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT

Dealing 020 7426 6232

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Winchester ‡	5663.32		...	0.60

COLUMBIA THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS

Enqs:0870 601 6183 Dealing: 0870 6083

Share Class 1-Retail

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Gwth & Inc ‡	1627		-3	0.10
FTSE All Shr Track ‡	599		-4	2.70
Global Gwth SCI ‡	405.3		+0.6	...
Strategic Bd ‡	228.7		+0.2	3.90

EDENTREE INV MGMT

0800 358 3010

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Sust Eur Eqty A Dis ‡@	496.3		-2.60	1.77
Sust Gbl Eqty A Dis ‡	463.7		+1.20	0.55
Sust Mgd Income ‡	142.2		-0.80	4.72
Sust Sterling Bond A Dis ‡	85.37		+0.05	4.98
Sust UK Eqty A Dis ‡@	258.3		-1.20	1.63
Sust UK Eqty Opps A Dis ‡	331.2		-0.30	1.42

FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL

Private Clnts:0800 414161 Broker Dlgs:0800 414181

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Spec ‡	2951		...	...
American ‡	8081		...	...
Euro Opps ‡	748.5		...	0.48
European ‡	4469		...	0.76
Global Focus ‡	3735		...	...
Global High Income Bond A Dis ‡	22.39		...	6.57
Global Special Sits ‡	8986		...	...
Japan ‡	979.3		...	0.34
Moneyblder Bal ‡	49.02		...	0.60
Moneyblder Inc ‡	28.29		...	5.29
Moneyblder UK Ind ‡	202.66		...	2.47
Special Sits ‡	7542		...	1.64

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Opportunities Fund A Dis ‡	107.1		...	1.41

HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS

01296 386 386

Authorised Inv Funds

Share Class C

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bond ‡	37.44		...	4.50
Intl Gwth ‡	217.4		...	0.60
UK FTSE 100 IT ‡	108.7		...	...
UK FTSE All-S IT ‡	120.9		...	...

HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK)

Enq:0845 745 6123 Dlg:0845 745 6126 Mon-Frid:8-6

HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Ind Acc ‡	1642		+4	0.77
Euro Ind Acc ‡	1877		-5	2.26
Euro Ind Inc ‡	1087		-4	2.31
FTSE 100 Ind Acc ‡	444.3		-1.2	2.49
FTSE 100 Ind Inc ‡	180.3		-0.5	2.64
FTSE 250 Ind Acc ‡	413.2		+1.0	2.84
FTSE 250 Ind Inc ‡	224.0		+0.5	2.83
FTSE All-S Acc ‡	1114		-7	2.65
FTSE FTSE All-S Inc ‡	501.1		-3.2	2.79
Japan Ind Acc ‡	236.3		+0.2	1.43
Japan Ind Inc ‡	171.5		+0.3	1.47
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	1041		+2	1.59
Pacific Ind Inc ‡	589.2		+1.6	1.61

HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) Retail Share Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd Acc ‡@	312.6		+0.3	4.20
Income Acc ‡	1062		...	3.28
Income Inc ‡@	402.8		-1.7	3.31
Monthly Inc Acc ‡@	313.4		...	3.75
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	155.9		...	4.02
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Acc ‡@	225.9		-0.8	2.97
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Inv ‡@	87.57		-0.31	3.04

HSBC Specialist Investment Fds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Index Retail Inc ‡	1265		+3	0.76

INVESCO FUND MGRS LTD

Dling:0800 085 8571 Inv Serv:0800 085 8677

Brkr Serv:0800 028 2121

Invesco Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond ‡	232.19		...	4.06
High Income Dis ‡	435.1		...	3.12
Income & Growth Dis ‡	508.09		...	3.08
Income Inc ‡	1678.51		...	2.85
Money Acc ‡	107.84		...	3.64
Monthly Inc Plus Dis ‡	92.43		...	5.73
UK Opps UK Acc ‡	1404.46		...	1.46
UK Sml Cos Eqty Acc ‡	1384.81		...	1.19

INVESTEC FUND MGRS LTD

Broker Support and Dealing: 020 7597 1900

OEIC Series I, ii,iii & iv

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American A Acc ‡	880.75		+3.72	...
Cautious Managed A Acc ‡	472.73		+0.34	2.61
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	270.82		+0.61	2.47
Diversified Growth A Acc ‡	332.39		+1.64	0.20
Diversified Growth Inc ‡	122.33		+0.6	0.94
Diversified Income A Acc ‡	377		+0.16	3.78
Diversified Income A Inc ‡	67.89		+0.03	5.19
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Ac ‡	144.7		+0.13	5.96
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ‡	67.03		+0.06	7.65
Emerging Mkts Equity A Ac ‡	290.14		-0.63	0.04
Emerging Mkts Leaders A Acc ‡	1229.57		+5.04	...
Global Equity A Acc ‡	305.51		+0.67	...
Global Franchise A Acc ‡	407.5		-0.58	...
Global Free Enterprise A Acc ‡	2123.45		-0.97	...
Global Gold A Acc ‡	568.21		+23.11	...
Global Special Situations A Acc ‡	533.63		-1.25	...
Global Special Situations A Inc ‡	409.39		-0.95	...
UK Special Situations A Acc ‡	2762.62		+2.28	1.02
UK Special Situations A Inc ‡	950.09		+0.78	1.03

For ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEIC)

JANUS HENDERSON INVESTORS

Investor Serv: 0800 832 831 Dlng:0845 946 4646

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
All Stcks Credit A Inc ‡	113.9		...	4.40
Asian Div Inc U Trust Inc ‡	97.65		...	5.40
Cautious Managed Fd A Acc ‡	359.4		...	3.80
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	154.2		...	3.90
China Opp Fund A Acc ‡	1342		+8	0.10
Emg Mkts Opps Fd A Acc ‡	298		...	...
Erpn Sel Opps Fd A Acc ‡	3270		-11	0.20
Fix IntMnthly Inc Fd Acc ‡	33.22		...	6.10
Global Equity Fund Acc ‡	6603		...	...
Global Equity Income A Ac ‡	88.96		-0.16	2.40
Global Tech A Acc ‡	7137		...	...
Instl UK idx Opps A Acc ‡	179.598		...	2.20
M-Asset Abs Rtn A Acc ‡	187.5		...	2.70
M-Man Active Fd A Acc ‡	338.5		-0.2	1.70
M-Man Inc Grth A Inc ‡	163.3		...	2.70
M-Man Inc Fd Grth A Acc ‡	233.9		...	2.70
Sterling Bond U Trst Acc ‡	230.3		...	4.40
Sterling Bond U Trst Inc ‡	55.63		...	4.40
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡	95.68		...	5.80
UK Abs Ret Fd A Acc ‡	206.9		+0.2	2.10
UK Alpha Fund A Acc ‡	202.1		-0.5	1.30
US Growth Fund A Acc ‡	3054		+19	...

J.P. MORGAN ASSET MANAGEMENT

OEIC

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Equity Core E Net Acc ‡@	712.0000		-4.4000	2.51

JUPITER UT TRUST MANAGERS LTD

020 7581 3020

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Distribution & Growth ‡	125.78		-0.1051	2.93
Euro Special Sits ‡	606.43		-0.1937	0.71
European ‡	4036.33		-0.1932	0.61
Financial Opps ‡	1357.37		-0.5684	1.01
Global Macro Bd L GBP ACC ‡	428.2		-0.1332	3.39
Merlin Bal Acc ‡	348.47		+0.2621	2.26
Merlin Growth Acc ‡	836.87		-0.1262	0.20
Merlin Inc Acc ‡@	471.3		-0.6684	3.47
Merlin Wwide Inc ‡	611.51		-0.6290	...
UK Dynamic Equity L Dis ‡	297.99		-0.3995	1.75
UK Growth ‡	285.72		-0.8468	0.64
UK Income Trust ‡	1030.57		-0.5660	4.58

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LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MANGRS) LTD

Enquiries: 0870 050 0955 Dealing: 0870 050 0956

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Ind Acc ‡@	820.9000		-250.0000	190.00
Euro Ind Inc ‡@	490.2000		-150.0000	200.00
Fixed Int Acc ‡	150.6000		+10.0000	460.00
Fixed Int Dist ‡	62.2600		+4.0000	460.00
Global Health ‡	123.4000		...	90.00
Glob Tech Acc ‡	238.4000		...	...
High Inc Acc ‡@	154.3000		+20.0000	580.00
Japan Ind Acc ‡	113.2000		...	130.00
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	410.7000		+160.0000	140.00
UK Index Trust Acc ‡	540.7000		-360.0000	240.00
Uk Index Trust Dist ‡	234.1000		-150.0000	240.00
US Ind Acc ‡	1428.0000		...	50.00
Worldwide Acc ‡	473.2000		-50.0000	90.00

M&G SECURITIES

Enq:0800 390 390 Dealing Line: 0800 328 3196

Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Charifund Inc ‡@	1909.42		-9.2	5.11

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 2

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Extra Income Inc ‡	830.34		-3.85	5.08
Gilt & Fxd Int Inc ‡	67.19		+0.01	4.38
Gl Hi Yd Bd Inc ‡@	39.8		+0.04	6.25
Index Linked Bd Inc ‡	101.65		+0.17	1.56
Index Trckr Inc ‡	105.04		-0.69	2.99
Short Dated Corp Bd Inc ‡	25.36		+0.01	4.25
UK Select A Inc ‡	3326.55		-7.1	2.63

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 3

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd A Inc ‡@	32.88		+0.01	5.01
Dividend Inc ‡@	66.89		-0.46	5.34
Recovery A Inc ‡@	143.4		-0.11	2.83
Sml Cos Inc ‡@	369.33		+2.06	2.77

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 4

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Episode Allocation A Inc ‡@	162.17		-0.11	3.78

MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST

0808 005 5555

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
High Income ‡	87.2		...	4.60
High Income Acc ‡	297.5		...	4.60
UK 100 Comp Acc ‡	721.4		...	3.10
UK 100 Comp Inc ‡	324.6		...	3.10
UK Select Port ‡	483.9		...	2.90
UK Select Port Acc ‡	1107		...	2.90
W'wide Mgd Acc ‡@	1342		...	0.20
Worldwide Mgd Acc ‡@	747.1		...	0.20

MORGAN STANLEY INVESTMENT MGMT

Enquiries: 0800 0961 962

The Morgan Stanley Funds (UK)

Class A Shares

Equity

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Glob Bal Inc F F Acc ‡	1049.40		...	1.54
Glob Bal Inc F F Inc ‡	938.65		...	1.55
Glob Bal Inc F I Inc ‡	936.69		...	1.49
Glob Bal Inc F I Acc ‡	1046.53		...	1.47
Glob Bal Sust F F Acc ‡	1036.68		...	1.65
Glob Bal Sust F F Inc ‡	989.88		...	1.66
Glob Bal Sust F I Acc ‡	1034.12		...	1.57
Glob Bal Sust F I Inc ‡	989.45		...	1.60
Glob Br Eq Fund F Inc ‡	1107.06		...	4.31
Glob Br Eq Fund I Acc ‡	1744.03		...	4.28
Glob Br Eq Fund I Inc ‡	1170.39		...	4.40
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	14240.26		...	0.32
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	1646.64		...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1755.19		...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	3830.17		...	0.32
Glob Quality Fund F Acc (PH) ‡	1552.7		...	0.49
Glob Quality Fund F Inc ‡	1516.23		...	0.51
Glob Quality Fund I Acc ‡	1558.19		...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1547.3		...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund F Acc ‡	1574.63		...	0.51
Stg Corp Bond F F Acc ‡	144.8		...	4.87
Stg Corp Bond F F Inc ‡	98.19		...	4.89
Stg Corp Bond F I Inc ‡	1382.83		...	4.72
Stg Corp Bond F I Acc ‡	3063.35		...	4.72
US Adv F F Acc ‡	2467.51		...	...
US Adv F F Acc (PH) ‡	1482.55		...	...
US Adv F I Acc ‡	2598.05		...	...
US Adv F I Acc (PH) ‡	1534.98		...	...

SANTANDER UNIT TST MGRS

08457 413002

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Inc Inc ‡	244.0		...	...
Stkmkt 100 Tkr ‡	230.8000		...	...
UK Growth I Acc ‡	656.9		...	...
UK Growth Inc ‡	315.4		...	...

SCOTTISH MUTUAL INV MNGRES LTD

0141 248 6100

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Far Eastern Inc	617.0700	649.4700	...	...
Mutual Far Eastern	1350.5100	1425.3400	+0.27	0.39
Mutual UK Eq	1429.4900	1508.7000	...	7.81
UK Equity Inc	562.2300	593.3800	...	7.81

SCOTTISH WIDOWS UNIT TRUST MNGRS

0845 300 2244

Overseas Growth Investment Funds

Tracker & Special Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr A Acc ‡	607.3		-1.80	2.50
UK Trkr A Inc ‡	276.4		-0.80	2.50

UK & Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond A Acc ‡@	329.9		+0.50	4.00
Corp Bond A Inc ‡@	108.2		+0.20	4.00
Envir Invtr A Acc ‡	475.0		+3.00	2.10
Hi Inc Bond A Ac ‡@	298.4		+0.20	6.40
Hi Inc Bond A Inc ‡@	70.33		+0.06	6.40
Hi Res A Acc ‡	563.9		+1.80	3.70
Hi Res A Inc ‡	152.6		+0.50	3.80
Strat In A Acc ‡@	229.2		+0.30	4.50
Strat In A Inc ‡@	86.34		+0.11	4.50
UK Eq Trckr A ‡	136.9		+0.40	2.50

OEIC B Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr B Acc ‡	672.8		-2.00	2.60
UK Trkr B Inc ‡	274.8		-0.80	2.60

OEIC C Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Eq Tkr C ‡	133.7		+0.50	2.60

STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS

0845 279 3003

Investment Funds (OEIC)-Retail Shares

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
AAA Inc CAT Acc ‡	98.62		...	2.52
AAA Inc CAT Inc ‡	51.19		...	2.52
AAA Income Acc ‡	108.80		...	...
Amer Eq Gth Acc ‡	296.10		...	...
Glb Advtg CAT Acc ‡	202.8		...	1.32
Glob Advtg Acc ‡	267.30		...	...
Higher Inc Acc ‡	186.10		...	...
Higher Inc Inc ‡	48.15		...	...
Managed Acc ‡	527.2		...	1.83
UK Ethical Acc ‡	258.80		...	...
UK Smlr Cos Acc ‡	830.20		...	...

SVS BROWN SHIPLEY FUNDS

Enquiries:0141 222 1151

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced A Acc ‡	187.18		...	2.02
Blanced A Inc ‡	158.4		...	2.07
Cautious A Acc ‡	133.51		...	2.44
Cautious A Inc ‡	105.59		...	2.48
Dynamic A Acc ‡	500.5		...	1.40
Dynamic A Inc ‡	437.9		...	1.41
Growth A Acc ‡	494.3		...	1.63
Income A Acc ‡	320.08		...	2.17

THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS

Client Serv: 0800 0684000

Retail Shares Class 1

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle HY Bd Rtl Inc ‡	39.37		-14.75	4.65
Threadneedle Mnthly Etr Inc Inc ‡	102.2999		-63.27	2.72
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Bd Inc ‡	55.0299		+4.04	4.27
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Acc ‡	54.9286		+3.89	3.95
Threadneedle Stg Bd Ret Inc ‡	39.6891		+4.5	4.16
Threadneedle Strat Bd Ret ‡	41.8656		-12.19	3.82
Threadneedle UK Eq Inc Rtl Inc ‡	121.0159		-79.23	3.47
Threadneedle UK Growth & inc Rtl Inc ‡	113.9069		-72.64	3.17
Threadneedle UK Istl Rtl ‡	251.127		-133.41	1.33
Threadneedle UK Mnthly Inc Rtl Inc ‡	90.7132		-69.44	2.98
Threadneedle UK Rtl Inc ‡	168.2552		-86.86	1.32
Theadneedle U Smaller Coms Rtl Inc ‡	410.4592		+329.59	0.38

For Resolution see Ignis

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	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
IFSL Marlborough Eur A Dis1016	1016		...	1.21

* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); † Ex dividend; ‡Middle price; . . . No significant data. # Periodic charge deducted from capital; @ Exit charge

British funds

Index-Linked

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/-	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
73.08	63.68	Tr IL 0 ½% 50	64.37	-.40	0.78	2.51
66.33	57.06	Tr IL 0 ¼% 52	57.54	-.39	0.43	2.51
101.91	97.20	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 28	99.42	+.08	0.13	0.42
100.99	97.18	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 29	98.31	+.06	0.13	0.78
98.50	94.73	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 31	95.73	+.04	0.13	1.00
88.33	82.97	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 36	83.62	-.12	0.15	1.89
82.85	76.16	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 39	77.55	-.15	0.16	2.17
79.32	72.11	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 41	72.93	-.17	0.17	2.26
74.05	65.19	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 44	67.23	-.22	0.19	2.42
71.23	62.87	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 46	63.61	-.34	0.20	2.48
68.00	59.19	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 48	59.98	-.39	0.21	2.50
60.61	50.05	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 56	50.77	-.47	0.25	2.43
58.90	48.59	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 58	49.83	-.53	0.25	2.40
54.25	43.57	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 65	44.58	-.66	0.28	2.26
53.89	40.40	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 68	43.50	-.72	0.29	2.21
57.66	42.98	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 73	44.89	-.77	0.28	1.92
97.88	93.36	Tr IL 0 ¾% 34	93.96	-.05	0.80	1.60
79.12	70.87	Tr IL 0 ¾% 47	71.65	-.34	1.05	2.47
62.70	49.79	Tr IL 0 ⅜% 62	52.59	-.67	0.71	2.35
87.38	80.77	Tr IL 0 ⅝% 40	81.31	-.16	0.77	2.22
84.28	76.46	Tr IL 0 ⅝% 42	77.03	-.24	0.81	2.33
104.16	100.95	Tr IL 1 ¼% 27	101.16	+.06	1.24	0.34
103.67	99.28	Tr IL 1 ¼% 32	99.84	-.03	1.25	1.28
86.56	72.33	Tr IL 1 ¼% 54	75.06	-.51	1.67	2.48
85.60	73.36	Tr IL 1 ¼% 55	74.61	-.52	1.68	2.47
99.52	94.19	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 35	94.70	-.11	1.19	1.76
97.09	90.76	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 37	91.33	-.14	1.23	1.99
102.53	95.86	Tr IL 1 ¾% 38	96.60	-.15	1.81	2.07
99.42	88.49	Tr IL 1 ⅞% 49	89.54	-.49	2.09	2.47
248.27	236.46	Tr IL 2% 35	241.19	-.14	0.83	1.73
349.35	338.41	Tr IL 4 ⅛% 30	341.34	+.28	1.21	0.90

Longs (Over 15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/-	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
26.99	22.31	Tr 0 ½% 61	22.83	-.33	2.19	5.45
65.04	55.40	Tr 0 ⅝% 51	56.43	-.38	0.22	2.51
38.39	32.78	Tr 0 ⅝% 50	33.82	-.39	1.85	5.70
47.60	40.99	Tr 1 ½% 53	42.04	-.42	3.57	5.76
45.88	39.62	Tr 1 ¼% 51	40.71	-.43	3.07	5.75
33.04	27.53	Tr 1 ⅛% 73	28.00	-.38	4.02	5.28
48.44	41.88	Tr 1 ¾% 57	42.78	-.47	4.09	5.71
48.36	41.73	Tr 1 ⅝% 54	42.87	-.45	3.79	5.74
41.45	35.65	Tr 1 ⅝% 71	36.29	-.43	4.48	5.41
57.14	49.76	Tr 2 ½% 65	50.81	-.56	4.92	5.63
74.02	64.55	Tr 3 ½% 68	66.04	-.66	5.30	5.61
81.50	72.00	Tr 3 ¾% 52	73.66	-.62	5.09	5.71
80.90	71.30	Tr 3 ¾% 53	72.83	-.62	5.15	5.73
88.15	77.58	Tr 4 ¼% 55	79.29	-.70	5.36	5.71
83.52	73.44	Tr 4% 60	74.88	-.70	5.34	5.69

Mediums (5-15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/-	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
83.19	79.47	Tr 0 ¼% 31	81.46	-.28	0.31	4.45
86.27	82.79	Tr 0 ⅜% 30	84.72	-.23	0.44	4.40
72.25	67.14	Tr 0 ⅝% 35	69.00	-.36	0.91	4.95
79.97	75.46	Tr 0 ⅞% 33	77.21	-.31	1.13	4.75
48.97	42.75	Tr 0 ⅞% 46	44.06	-.40	1.99	5.65
54.44	47.82	Tr 1 ½% 47	49.09	-.47	3.06	5.69
61.88	55.55	Tr 1 ¼% 41	57.26	-.47	2.18	5.41
66.75	60.85	Tr 1 ⅛% 39	62.63	-.41	1.80	5.25
75.83	69.99	Tr 1 ¾% 37	71.62	-.41	2.44	5.14
55.77	49.19	Tr 1 ¾% 49	50.32	-.47	3.48	5.70
85.07	81.01	Tr 1% 32	82.78	-.25	1.21	4.60
82.54	74.42	Tr 3 ½% 45	76.03	-.58	4.60	5.60
95.49	90.74	Tr 3 ¼% 33	92.04	-.34	3.53	4.69
80.41	72.57	Tr 3 ¼% 44	74.23	-.55	4.38	5.58
100.00	85.76	Tr 3 ¾% 38	87.55	-.47	4.28	5.21
102.40	96.34	Tr 4 ½% 34	97.78	-.40	4.60	4.83
101.93	0.01	Tr 4 ½% 35	97.12	-.42	4.63	4.92
96.45	87.54	Tr 4 ½% 42	89.44	-.61	5.03	5.49
102.33	0.01	Tr 4 ¼% 32	98.32	-.34	4.32	4.58
100.56	94.70	Tr 4 ¼% 34	96.10	-.40	4.42	4.85
99.39	92.65	Tr 4 ¼% 36	94.30	-.44	4.51	5.01
100.00	88.42	Tr 4 ¼% 39	90.23	-.53	4.71	5.29
100.00	86.92	Tr 4 ¼% 40	88.92	-.55	4.78	5.37
90.97	81.54	Tr 4 ¼% 46	83.43	-.60	5.09	5.63
89.58	79.95	Tr 4 ¼% 49	81.73	-.68	5.20	5.67
101.49	97.47	Tr 4 ⅛% 31	98.35	-.30	4.19	4.53
100.70	95.57	Tr 4 ⅛% 33	96.77	-.34	4.26	4.70
104.72	100.54	Tr 4 ¾% 30	101.25	-.28	4.69	4.43
103.33	96.78	Tr 4 ¾% 35	98.31	-.45	4.83	4.98
102.00	93.84	Tr 4 ¾% 38	95.67	-.53	4.96	5.23
102.58	98.98	Tr 4 ⅜% 30	99.70	-.23	4.39	4.47
97.07	89.07	Tr 4 ⅜% 40	90.83	-.56	4.82	5.34
100.37	100.37	Tr 4 ⅝% 32	100.05	-.34	4.62	4.61
100.00	94.52	Tr 4 ⅝% 37	96.05	-.49	4.82	5.11
100.99	96.96	Tr 4 ⅞% 36	98.60	-.48	4.94	5.05
105.68	96.52	Tr 5 ¼% 41	98.57	-.62	5.33	5.39
105.44	93.20	Tr 5 ⅜% 56	95.16	-.77	5.65	5.72

Shorts (Under 5 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/-	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
91.87	89.09	Tr 0 ½% 29	91.18	-.14	0.55	4.30
98.67	91.49	Tr 0 ⅛% 28	94.43	-.07	0.13	4.06
99.39	96.16	Tr 0 ⅜% 26	99.36	- ...	0.38	3.65
91.00	0.01	Tr 0 ⅞% 29	89.66	-.17	0.98	4.38
97.41	95.29	Tr 1 ¼% 27	97.32	-.05	1.28	4.21
95.46	92.89	Tr 1 ⅝% 28	94.46	-.13	1.72	4.29
101.17	98.03	Tr 4% 29	98.89	-.17	4.04	4.43
101.39	99.44	Tr 4 ¼% 27	100.01	-.07	4.25	4.24
101.88	98.28	Tr 4 ⅛ % 29	99.17	-.17	4.16	4.43
100.70	99.60	Tr 4 ⅛% 27	100.03	-.01	4.12	4.01
101.65	99.40	Tr 4 ⅜% 28	100.06	-.09	4.37	4.33
107.53	103.38	Tr 6% 28	103.82	-.16	5.78	4.25

* maturities having an eight-month indexation lag.

This is a paid for information service. For further details on a particular fund, readers should contact their fund manager.

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Defence start-up valued at $3.4bn

Alex Ralph
Chief Business Correspondent

LEON NEAL/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; KRISZTIAN BOCSI/BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES

The fast-growing defence technology group Cambridge Aerospace has raised $300 million at a $3.4 billion valuation, just two years after it was founded.

The series C round increases the company's total funding to $636 million since it was set up in 2024. The round was led by DFJ Growth, a San Francisco-based investor.

The funding will be used to expand the development of its missile and drone interceptor systems, as well as its manufacturing capabilities.

Cambridge Aerospace is developing a low cost anti-drone interceptor called Skyhammer, which is in production, and a rocket-powered interceptor missile, Starhammer, that is built for high-speed targets such as cruise missiles and is set to come to market next year.

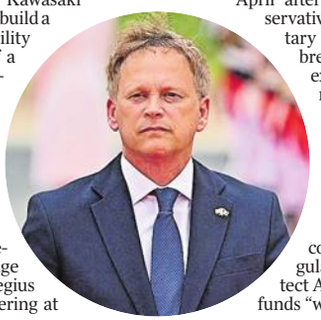
The company had earlier raised $200 million at a $1.3 billion valuation in April, a funding round co-led by the entrepreneur and investor Elad Gil and the venture capital firm Spark Capital, and has received a number of Ministry of Defence contracts. Gil is among the investors in the latest round, along with Lux, Accel and Lakestar among others.

The MoD announced in April that it was buying Skyhammer air defence systems from Cambridge Aerospace, with deliveries starting from May.

Skyhammer, which began development in January 2025, has a range of more than 30km and a top speed of 700km/h, enabling it to intercept drones and low-speed missiles.

The company was among 13 UK-based defence firms that met Gulf ambassadors in March as part of an MoD-convened meeting to discuss new equipment and technology that could support regional allies to counter Iranian drone and missile attacks.

In June, Cambridge Aerospace signed a deal with Kawasaki Heavy Industries to build a manufacturing facility in Japan, as part of a broader tech partnership between the UK and Japan.



Cambridge Aerospace has about 250 employees, mostly in the UK, and is led by Steven Barrett, its chief executive, who relocated to Cambridge in 2024 to become regius professor of engineering at the university. He had moved from the US, where he was head of aeronautics and astronautics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Sir Grant Shapps stepped down as Cambridge Aerospace's chairman in April after the former Conservative defence secretary was found to have breached the rules on ex-ministers' business appointments. Shapps, who lost his seat at the 2024 general election, was defence secretary under Rishi Sunak.

Barrett said the company had a "singular mission to protect Allied skies" and the funds "will allow us to continue to scale our manufacturing and our delivery to meet the pace of threats". Cambridge Aerospace is in talks with the US government.

Dan Jarvis, the former defence secretary, is briefed on drone interceptors at Cambridge Aerospace this year; left, former chairman Sir Grant Shapps

He has said the company is able to produce its interceptors at a lower cost and greater volume using technology, such as artificial intelligence, and its "highly driven, ambitious talent".

"Ukraine feels very close when you move back to the UK after a period thousands of miles away," Barrett said. "And it seems really obvious that we had a desperate need for cost-effective air defence. You can see that every day in the news and that was obvious even a couple of years ago."

Randy Glein, managing partner at DFJ Growth, said: "We surveyed the global landscape and identified Cambridge as having the best team and technology to build the most advanced and modern air defence infrastructure for Europe and its allies."

The government is working to focus more state procurement on UK start-up and scale-up companies to accelerate their growth.

Wes Streeting, the defence secretary, said: "It is exactly what our unicorn scheme is designed to create: British start-ups scaling into billion-pound companies, creating skilled jobs, cementing the UK's position at the forefront of defence innovation."

GameStop toys with eBay tie-up plan

Tom Howard

GameStop, the American video game retailer at the heart of the so-called meme stock trading frenzy during the Covid pandemic, is considering abandoning its audacious $55.5 billion takeover bid for eBay.

The GameStop chief executive, Ryan Cohen, is instead mulling over a form of partnership that would allow eBay to take advantage of GameStop's 1,600 or so physical stores, according to Bloomberg, which cited people familiar with the discussions.

Ebay shares were down 2.9 per cent in afternoon trading in New York to $108.67, while GameStop shares were down 0.5 per cent to $19.07.

GameStop first announced its unsolicited cash-and-stock bid for eBay in May, valuing each share at $125. Cohen, 40, said that he would run the combined group and that there were $2 billion of annual costs that could be removed within 12 months. He also said that eBay "could be a legit competitor to Amazon".

Ebay's board rejected the offer but Cohen vowed to pursue a deal "one way or another" and bring together the world's biggest gaming retailer with one of the oldest names in ecommerce.

Cohen first found success as the co-founder of Chewy, a pet food retailer that he set up in 2011 at the age of 25 and sold for $3.35 billion in 2017, before turning his attention to GameStop.

His bold move for eBay immediately raised eyebrows, given the online auction and marketplace, with a stock market value of $48 billion, is almost five times as large as GameStop.

Since that offer was lodged, GameStop's shares have fallen 28 per cent while eBay's have risen 8 per cent, further compounding the difficulty that Cohen and his team would have in trying to make the maths add up. GameStop had not made a final decision on whether to abandon its offer, Bloomberg said. GameStop and eBay were contacted for comment.

If the two parties go down the partnership or joint venture route, it could potentially allow them to increase their market share in high-margin categories such as trading cards and collectables.

GameStop, as eBay's second-largest shareholder, having built a 9.8 per cent stake since February, would want a seat on its board as part of any future partnership.

In 2021 GameStop was gripped by an extraordinary rally as amateur traders co-ordinated in online forums to drive the share price higher, inflicting painful losses on hedge funds that had bet on the company's demise as gamers moved from physical dics and cartridges to downloads.

Sales of used cars return to growth after five years

Charlotte Bend

Britain's used-car market returned to growth, with more than two million second-hand vehicles sold for the first time in a second quarter since 2021, according to new figures.

Demand rose particularly sharply in April, up 110.9 per cent, and May, up 57.6 per cent, coinciding with fuel price rises linked to the conflict in the Middle East, according to the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders.

With 2,009,318 vehicles changing hands, the performance offset the marginal decline in the first quarter of 2026, delivering overall market growth of 0.2 per cent in the year to date, with 4,025,550 transactions.

Mike Hawes, the society's chief executive, said: "A return to growth is good news for motorists and the wider automotive sector, with sales of used EVs rising particularly strongly as more choice reaches more buyers.

"As the used market is where most people buy their cars, plentiful and affordable supply is vital. However, increasingly unrealistic targets in the new car market risk constraining that supply and pushing up costs."

There was strong demand for battery electric cars, with transactions up 67 per cent. Between April and June, more than one in 18 buyers made the switch, up from about one in 30 a year earlier. Hybrid electric vehicles also rose, up 31.2 per cent, while plug-in hybrid transactions fell by 6.8 per cent.

However, almost nine in ten buyers still chose conventionally fuelled cars in the quarter.

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Tue 15 **Tallinn, Estonia** (depart early pm)

Wed 16 **Riga, Latvia**

Thu 17 **Visby, Sweden** (depart early pm)

Fri 18 **Berlin (from Warnemünde), Germany**

Sat 19 **Aarhus, Denmark**

Tue 22 **Arrive in Southampton**

Dates not mentioned are spent relaxing at sea

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Robert Stephens ***Tempus***
Buy, sell or hold: today's best share tips

A likely winner in battle to rearm

BAE SYSTEMS

Market cap	First-half rev
£66.6 billion	£14.6 billion

BAE's share price has risen by 10 per cent since it released half-year results at the end of last month, which included upgraded financial guidance for the full year.

This means that the FTSE 100 aerospace and defence firm has generated a 283 per cent capital gain over the past five years. This is 232 percentage points greater than the wider index's capital return over the same period.

Clearly, some investors will question whether it is too late to buy the stock given its inflated market valuation. But with strong earnings growth prospects, excellent finances and a buoyant long-term industry outlook, could further index-beating capital gains lie ahead?

While BAE was formed in 1999 via the merger of British Aerospace and Marconi Electronic Systems, the company can trace its history all the way back to the gunpowder mills at Waltham Abbey in 1561. Concorde and the Avro Lancaster have been among its most famous products.

Today, the company is the largest defence contractor in both the UK and Europe, and the joint-fifth biggest in the world. Its products span a broad range of areas, from combat aircraft to warships and from cybersecurity to combat vehicles. The US and Britain are its main markets, accounting for 47 per cent and 25 per cent respectively of sales in the first half of its current year.

For the full financial year, BAE now expects to post earnings per share (EPS) growth of 11 to 13 per cent. This is up from a previous forecast of 9 to 11 per cent. And with the company expected to deliver a further 15 per cent rise in EPS next year, it offers highly attractive near-term growth potential given its status as one of the largest stocks in the FTSE 100.

In the longer term, of course, the firm's financial performance is set to benefit from continued geopolitical uncertainty. Even if conflict in the Middle East and Europe gives way to lasting peace over the coming months, which seems extremely unlikely at present, recent events in both regions and elsewhere have prompted a renewed focus on military spending in several big Nato countries.

Their push to spend 3.5 per cent of GDP annually on core defence by 2035 — part of a broader 5 per cent target and up from a previous figure of 2 per cent that many members formerly struggled to meet — means that BAE's wide range of products are likely to be in high and sustained demand.

And while the pace at which various countries reach the target is likely to ebb and flow, a lasting "pro-defence" shift in attitudes among politicians should ultimately catalyse the firm's top and bottom lines.

Alongside its upbeat EPS growth prospects, BAE has a very strong financial position. Its half-year results, for example, showed that it had a net debt-to-equity ratio of just 40 per cent. They also highlighted that net interest costs were covered 6.8 times by operating profits during the six-month period.

Both figures provide scope for the firm to make acquisitions in order to further catalyse its financial performance after brisk mergers and acquisitions activity over recent years. They also allow it to utilise excess capital to fund share buybacks, rather than pay down debt, with the latest iteration being a three-year £1.5 billion programme that is due to last until mid-2027.

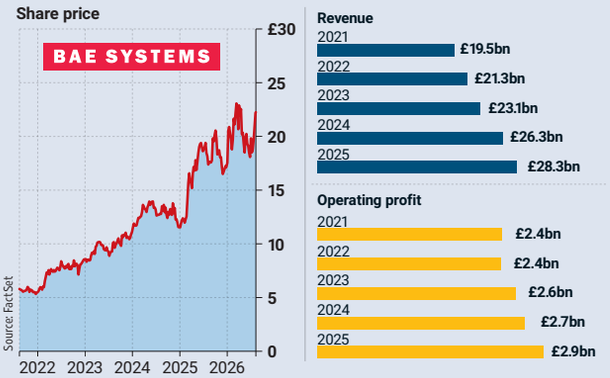
Of course, BAE's aforementioned share price rise over recent years means it now has a relatively rich market valuation. It trades on a price-to-earnings (P/E) ratio of 29.5, for example, which is more than 50 per cent higher than the FTSE 100's earnings multiple of 18.

While this means there is limited scope for a material upward rerating, which may naturally lead some investors to determine that the stock lacks investment appeal, even the company's upbeat EPS growth prospects in isolation should equate to capital gains that are substantially higher than those of the wider index over the coming years.

When combined with its excellent financial position, this means that BAE continues to offer a highly favourable risk/reward ratio on a long-term view. As a result, it is not too late to buy its shares — even after their stunning performance over recent years.

ADVICE Buy
WHY The company's earnings growth rate should provide further index-beating capital gains over the long run

Flying high



Wealth warnings send tobacco stocks lower

MARKET REPORT

For British American Tobacco, analysts at Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) gave with one hand and took with the other. While raising the target price on the stock by £2, they remained gloomy on the wider market, hitting BAT's share price (Christopher Dorrell writes).

"We retain our underperform rating as we continue to see downside risk to the group's profitability over the mid-term," they wrote in a research note. In particular, they highlighted the company's "adverse category margin mix" as a likely drag on future earnings, as BAT transitions to products with lower profit margins, such as vapes. Shares in the company ended the day 193p, or 4.4 per cent, lower at £42.28.

Fellow tobacco giant **Imperial Brands** also shed 127 p, or 4.6 per cent, to close at £26.64 as investors were not impressed by a report from Bloomberg that the company is preparing to cut thousands of jobs in key markets including the US and Europe. Like BAT, Imperial faces pressure as it pivots away from tobacco. It wants to make £320 million of annual savings by the end of the decade.

A company spokesperson said that its "multi-year programme" would "have an impact across our global market footprint".

The weakness in tobacco stocks contributed to the broader FTSE 100 blue-chip index closing 38.59 points, or 0.35 per cent, lower at 10,862.50. The mid-cap FTSE 250 was down 110.32 points, or 0.44 per cent, at 24,744.54.

RBC analysts were more hopeful on **Chemring**. They suggested the FTSE 250 munitions maker was well placed to benefit from declining missile reserves. "Stockpile depletion across missile programmes continues to drive a sustained restocking cycle and Chemring remains one of few Nato-qualified suppliers able to respond at scale," they wrote. Its shares rose 11p, or 1.75 per cent, to 638p.

Oil prices gained amid doubts that the Strait of Hormuz will open imminently. Iran insisted that the US must meet several demands, including ending sanctions, before the strait can re-open. Brent crude was trading 3.56 per cent higher at $87.14 per barrel.

Vistry shares fell to the bottom of the FTSE 250 after it emerged a credit insurer had cut the cover it extends to the housebuilder's supply chain. Its stock dipped 34½p, or 12.2 per cent, to 249p.

Wall Street report

US markets closed in the red as continued uncertainty over the Strait of Hormuz pushed oil prices higher. Investors were also looking ahead to a crucial CPI reading on Wednesday, which will shed more light on the persistence of inflationary pressures in the world's largest economy. The S&P 500 lost 4.53 points, or 0.06 per cent, to 7,753.11. The Nasdaq Composite shed 85.26 points, or 0.32 per cent, to 26,605.36, while the Dow Jones industrial average fell 60.95 points, or 0.11 per cent, to 53,975.98.

The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
Schiehallion Fund	5.4%
Ithaca Energy	4.2%
Fresnillo	3.5%
Oxford Nanopore	3.2%
Playtech	2.7%
Imperial Brands	-4.6%
Coca-Cola HBC	-4.8%
WPP	-5.0%
Oxford Biomedica	-5.3%
Vistry	-12.2%

SHEIN

Stock check Shein is reportedly pitching to potential investors in its Hong Kong IPO at a valuation below $30 billion, a drop of about 70 per cent from its peak

NEWS IN BRIEF

A tonic for breweries

The pace at which independent breweries in Britain shut for good slowed significantly in the first half of 2026, offering a glimmer of hope after a torrid few years for the sector.

At the end of June the UK had 1,550 independent breweries, according to the Society of Independent Brewers and Associates (Siba), after a net 16 breweries closed in the first six months of the year.

The number of closures marks a sharp slowdown on the previous year, when a record 137 breweries collapsed, equating to nearly three closures a week. By region, Scotland suffered the most, losing nine breweries in the first half of the year, while eight disappeared in the northeast and four closed in both the Midlands and Northern Ireland.

However, Siba's UK brewery tracker found a number of new brewing facilities opened up in pockets of the UK. Three new brewing facilities opened in the northwest, and in the southeast and Wales. Andy Slee, the chief executive at Siba, warned that that despite the green shoots of recovery for many breweries "the struggles are not behind them."

"Brewing businesses which have managed to weather the storm are seeing strong demand for independent beer," he said. "But profitability is still a concern with lack of access to pubs, high taxation and high production costs hitting brewers."

Bespoke travel sales boost

Growing demand for bespoke holidays has boosted sales at Travel Counsellors, whose platform connects holidaymakers to thousands of self-employed advisers. The Manchester-based firm said that over the past four weeks, group sales rose 11 per cent year-on-year, with particularly strong demand for cruises, up 24 per cent. Trips to the Mediterranean increased by 13 per cent, driven mainly by Italy and Greece. Travel Counsellors, which helps to plan trips for both corporate and leisure clients, said long-haul trips were resilient: sales to the US were up 10 per cent over the period, and to Africa by 69 per cent.

Hg Capital trades up

Strong trading performance from portfolio businesses helped Hg Capital to stabilise its net asset value in the second quarter after a volatile start to the year. The FTSE 250 investment trust, which backs private companies, said estimated NAV return per share was 0.5 per cent in the three months to June, against minus 5.4 per cent in the first quarter. But continued weakness in listed software stocks forced the business to write down the valuation of unlisted companies in its portfolio by 5 per cent in the second quarter. Private equity firms have to benchmark their unlisted holdings against publicly traded peers.

Amazon tech for Novo

Novo Nordisk, the maker of Wegovy weight-loss treatments, has agreed a strategic partnership with Amazon Web Services to speed up drug discovery. The Danish company and the US technology giant have created a "co-innovation" hub within Novo's existing London facility, where engineers and scientists from both companies will use AWS's artificial intelligence technologies alongside Novo Nordisk data in an attempt to accelerate the costly process of drug development leading to first human dose. AWS will be Novo's preferred cloud provider and strategic AI partner.

Business

EQUITY PRICES

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by ICE Data Services. The yield is the sum of a company's annual 12-month dividend payments divided by the last day's closing share price.
12-month high and low High/low prices for UK equities and investment trusts are based on intra-day figures.

Automobiles & Part

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
86¾	33¾	Aston Martin Lag	35⅛	-⅛	...	-0.7

Banking & Finance

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
265	177½	**Aberdeen Group**	250¼	-2⅜	5.8	11.6
1¼	0⅝	Acuity RM♦	0⅝		...	-3.4
4006	2624	**Admiral**	3798	-88	3.8	15.4
662½	414⅜	AJ Bell	608	-2½	2.4	23.7
28761⅛	22372¾	AON Corp‡	26390½	-167⅝	0.9	...
1130	799	Arbuthnot♦	830	-2½	6.6	7.6
276½	145⅞	Ashmore Group	223¾	-¾	7.6	18.4
2126½	1492⅞	Australia & NZ	1937⅝	-37¼	5.9	19.0
717⅜	590⅝	**Aviva**	707	-5⅝	5.6	26.3
1121⅞	674	Banco Santander	1092	-4	1.5	14.0
554⅛	352⅞	**Barclays**‡	518	+2	2.2	11.8
17½	4	Blue Star Capital♦	4¼		...	-2.2
710	613	BP Marsh & Ptnrs♦	676		5.4	5.1
363⅜	212	Bridgepoint Grp	340⅝	-1⅜	2.8	68.1
352	264⅝	Chesnara	340		6.6	-67.3
492	349	City of London Grp	486	-6	6.8	16.4
563½	318⅜	Close Bros	424⅜	-8¾	...	-6.3
753	203	CMC Markets‡	692	+2	2.0	25.2
2957⅝	2057	Deutsche Bank	2837⅜	+18⅞	3.0	10.5
93	74	EFG-Hermes Hldgs	74	-⅛	0.9	...
240¼	136	EPE Special Opps♦	211		...	8.7
85	52	Fiske♦	67½		1.7	5.9
92	80	Foresight Ventures VCT	83		4.3	15.5
4700	2215	Georgia Capital	4410	+10	...	2.7
57	43¼	Hansard Global	52		8.6	40.0
230	194	Helios U/W♦	223		4.5	7.7
1904	1257⅛	**Hiscox**	1807	-22	2.2	13.5
1610	927¾	**HSBC**	1526⅜	-2¾	3.6	17.1
1956	1016	**IG Group**	1360	+17	3.1	9.4
204	90⅞	Impax Asset Mgmt♦	112¼	-⅝	8.9	7.1
2340	1424⅞	**ICG**	2032	-10	4.3	12.2
145¾	115⅝	Intl Public P'ship	142¾	-⅝	6.2	-12.5
690	499⅜	**Investec**	676	+2½	5.7	8.8
76	60	Investment Co	75		...	...
73¾	48	IP Group	70¼	-¼	1.8	9.7
24	6½	Jarvis Securities♦	8		43.8	2.5
214½	113⅜	Jupiter Fund Mgmt‡	161	-⅝	3.7	8.4
700	549	Lancashire Hldgs‡	593	-4½	2.8	6.6
318⅛	217¼	**Legal & General**	311¼	-5¼	7.0	31.2
12580	6905	**Lion Finance Group**	12500	+60	3.0	8.8
385	223	Liontrust Asset Mgmt	303½	-1½	6.3	19.7
61	35	Livermore Invs Grp♦	37⅞	+½	8.3	17.1
117⅞	77⅜	**Lloyds Banking**‡	114⅝	-½	3.5	16.4
22	14	LMS Capital	15½	+¼	25.8	...
10140	6684	**London Stock Exchange**	8838	-82	1.8	37.1
367⅛	247	**M&G**	362⅜	-⅝	5.7	28.8
327¼	154¼	Man Group‡	310	-1¾	4.1	27.2
39¾	20	Manx Financial Grp♦‡	24		2.1	4.4
10	1¼	Marechale Capital♦	5	+¼	...	-15.6
185⅝	98¼	Metro Bank	173⅝	-¼	...	22.3
2621¼	1864⅝	National Australia	2153⅜	-57⅛	4.1	18.7
726	500¼	**NatWest Group**	711¾	-⅝	4.9	13.3
842⅝	438⅜	PayPoint	597	-3½	6.7	10.1
1238	910¼	**Prudential**	1042½	-2	1.9	9.1
1¼	0⅜	Quantum Blockchain♦	0⅜		...	-2.0
209	150¾	Quilter	198¼	-1¾	3.2	22.3
2500	1580	Rathbones Group	1694	-26	5.9	15.7
325	245	Rockwood Strategic	320	+4	...	0.0
2458½	1620	S & U	1985	+45	5.8	10.2
3	0¼	Sancus Lending♦	1⅛		...	7.2
59⅛	42¼	Schroder REIT	44¾	-½	8.0	...
599½	358⅝	**Schroders**‡	582½	-1½	3.8	17.1
1575½	1038¾	**St James's Place**‡	1140	-7	1.6	11.4
2278	1285	**Standard Chart'd**‡	2234	+15	2.3	15.5
948½	615	**Standard Life**	932½	-9	5.9	-198.0
6347⅛	4186	Sun Life Canada	6085½	+10⅜	3.3	...
6¾	2¾	Tavistock Invs♦	3	-⅛	3.3	2.5
5200	3615	TBC Bank Grp	4934	-2	5.2	6.9
1¾	0¼	Tern♦	1⅜		...	-1.6
60	40⅛	Time Finance♦	52		...	8.2
0⅜	0⅛	Tooru♦	0⅛		...	-1.7
4	1½	Truetide♦	3⅜		...	-6.0
132	77⅛	Vanquis Banking Gp	79⅞	-1⅝	...	25.0
2800	2000	Volvere♦	2080	-20	...	11.0
7239⅝	5453⅛	Wells Fargo‡	6460¾	-7⅝	2.3	...
2275⅜	1627¾	Westpac Bkg Corp	1865	-120⅜	4.3	17.8
31¾	23	Worsley Investors	28⅜		...	...
57550	49947¼	Zurich Insurance	54318½	-88½	5.1	18.6

Construction & Property

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
380	181	Alumasc♦	220		5.0	8.5
6⅝	4½	Aseana Properties	4¾		...	1.2
2½	1¼	Built Cybernetics♦	1½		...	-155.0
900	541	Balfour Beatty	860	-21	1.6	16.3
410¼	235⅜	**Barratt Redrow**	315⅜	-8¼	5.4	23.2
2890	1715	Bellway	2100	-24	3.4	15.8
4442	2796	Berkeley	3534	-92	...	10.7
1208	800½	Big Yellow Grp	903	+3	5.2	...
460	233	Billington Hldgs♦	420	-5	2.6	40.4
237	133½	Boot (Henry)	155	-2	5.1	8.8
383¾	271⅜	Breedon	349	-4¼	4.4	14.4
451⅝	318⅝	**British Land**	438⅝	-4⅝	5.3	...
2900	2500	Cardiff Property	2750		1.1	20.7
2196	1469⅜	Derwent London	2086	-14	3.9	...
5½	4⅛	DCI Advisors♦	4⅝		...	-2.7
19½	11	First Property♦	12½		2.0	6.9
75	29	Fletcher King♦	42½		5.3	28.7
62	31¾	Foxtons Group‡	37¼	-¼	3.1	8.7
632	407½	Galliford Try Hldgs	611	-8	3.3	18.1
394½	241	Genuit Group	305¼	-8⅜	4.2	16.8
435	221	Gleeson (MJ)	276		4.0	10.2
1047	788⅝	Grafton Grp Units	1031¾	-11	3.7	14.7
212½	149½	Grainger	173¾	-2½	4.8	6.3
377	270	Great Portland Est	353¾	-4	2.3	0.0
391¾	263⅜	Hammerson	373⅜	-1	4.9	...
191	116¾	Harworth Group	181		1.0	62.4
400	225	Heath (Samuel)♦	255		5.1	31.9
241½	180⅝	Helical	206	+2	1.3	42.7
150⅜	87⅝	Ibstock	90⅜	-2½	2.2	...
161½	112	James Halstead♦	133¼	+4⅝	6.7	13.7
3518	1238	Keller	3060	-16	2.6	15.1
8330⅛	8112¼	Kingspan Group	8189⅛		0.6	25.9
726	522½	**Land Securities**	710½	-4	5.8	...
216¼	175¼	**LondonMetric Prop**	193½	-1½	6.4	...
25⅝	4¾	Macau Prop Opp Fd	6⅛		...	-0.4
209½	124	Marshalls	169⅛	-12¼	4.1	29.7
108¾	66	Michelmersh Brick♦	74½	-2	6.2	18.5
1	0⅜	Mindflair♦	0⅜		...	-1.3
5730	3915	Morgan Sindall	4452	-42	3.7	12.0
10200	8350	Mountview Estates‡	8800		6.0	16.9
85	65¾	NewRiver REIT	81¾	+¾	8.2	...
234	160	Palace Capital	176		8.5	39.1
320	261	Panther Securities♦	296		4.1	12.1
1552	947⅜	**Persimmon**	1143½	-23	5.2	12.8
24	15	Plaza Centers	14½		...	-0.1
109⅝	87⅜	Primary Health Props‡	95⅝	-¼	7.6	...
33⅜	28	Real Estate Inv♦	30⅞		4.9	-61.8
849½	578¾	Safestore	616½	-10	5.0	...
1126	791½	Savills	973	-3	3.5	18.7
5½	0¼	Secure Prop Dev & Inv♦	0½		...	-0.1
997⅜	603	**Segro**‡	944⅝	-15	3.3	...
162⅛	124⅛	Shaftesbury Capital	145⅜	+⅜	3.0	7.8
13⅛	6¾	SIG	8¾		...	-1.6
153	105	SigmaRoc♦	131¾	-3¼	...	18.1
113	86¾	Sirius Real Estate	98½	-½	5.5	7.6
140	106	Smart (J)	112½		2.9	8.6
23¾	16	Steppe Cement♦	22		...	19.7
116⅞	74⅛	Taylor Wimpey	82⅞	-1¾	5.0	29.6
140	104	Town Centre	129½	+1	3.9	...
723½	493⅜	Travis Perkins	667½	-7½	1.7	-8.0
175	132¼	**Tritax Big Box**	163⅝	-2¾	5.0	...
751	442¼	Unite Group	527	-5½	7.2	...
746⅜	220	Vistry Group	249	-34⅝	...	5.9
434⅜	312	Workspace Group	361¼	-2	7.2	...
920	730	Wynnstay Props♦	895		3.2	12.5

Consumer Goods

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
229	93	AEP Plantations	176	-⅝	3.5	10.3
30	17⅝	Airea♦	26½		3.8	10.4
2359	1729½	**AB Foods**	2083	-47	3.0	14.7
715⅜	589	Barr (AG)	604	-3	3.1	14.3
5326	3677	**British Amer Tob**‡	4228	-193	5.8	12.0
1376½	976	**Burberry Group**	1171	+6½	...	...
181¼	85⅜	C&C Group	97¼	-1¾	5.0	...
5⅞	2¾	Capital Metals♦	4¼		...	-35.5
460	271	Churchill China♦	390		5.4	9.8
5195	3270	**Coca-Cola HBC**	4724	-236	2.2	21.4
1515¾	821	Colefax♦	1455		0.4	10.3
5810	4775	Cranswick‡	5250	-20	2.1	17.7
2142	1295½	**Diageo**	1792	+2	2.1	31.0
0¼	0	Distil♦	0		...	-0.6
1918	1160	Evans (M.P.)♦	1632	-44	3.7	10.1
151½	114½	Fevara	138	-1½	1.7	6.0
23540	14070	**Games Workshop**	18960	+80	3.0	30.4
2185⅜	1028⅝	Glanbia	2067⅝	-5¼	1.8	38.2
307½	191⅛	Greencore	264⅝	+1¼	1.0	20.0
80	4⅝	Headlam	11⅛	-1¼	...	-0.1
861	447⅞	Hilton Food	615	+2	5.7	7.0
3632	2613	**Imperial Brands**	2664	-127	6.3	10.6
7646⅜	5567¾	Kerry Group	7176¾	+33	1.7	21.0
170	106¼	McBride	165¼	+⅝	1.8	8.5
180	85	Mulberry Group♦	175		...	-13.5
1275	880	Nichols♦‡	1060	+20	3.7	18.1
374	252	Norcros	325	-9	3.5	...
379	309	Origin Ents♦	366		4.0	8.6
1	0¼	PACSCo♦	0⅜		...	-0.0
138	47⅛	Portmeirion♦	50		...	-1.1
1½	0½	Provexis♦	1⅛		...	-56.2
114	65⅛	PZ Cussons	111⅝	+4¾	3.3	23.7
138	88	REA	111	+1	...	-214.4
213¾	155	Tandem♦	189½	+2½	1.6	12.2
330	220	The Character Grp♦	315		2.2	-46.7
10	5	Ukrproduct Grp♦	6½		...	-15.1
5542⅛	3644	**Unilever**‡	4637	-33	3.6	12.5
93	19½	Victoria♦	58¼	-2	...	-0.2

Engineering

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
59⅛	10	Assoc Brit Eng	20		...	-6.9
2180	1458	Avon Technologies‡	1914	+18	1.0	74.1
1527	902⅜	**Babcock**	1190½	+4	0.6	28.3
2360	1529	**BAE Systems**	2244	+24	1.7	32.6
1500	500	Braime A N/V♦	1200		1.4	6.4
2295	1376	Braime Group♦	2350	+100	0.7	12.5
550	350	Caffyns‡	440	+40	2.3	-10.8
0½	0⅛	Cap XX Ld♦	0⅛		...	-3.7
340	202¼	Castings‡	296	+5	6.2	17.1
27	12⅜	Checkit♦	21	-½	...	-8.1
650¾	446½	Chemring Group	638	+11	1.3	35.8
55	28⅛	Chesterfield Spec Cyl♦	34½		...	-38.3
1538	881⅛	Cohort♦	1372	+74	1.3	26.3
534⅝	171	Dialight	520	+10	...	...
15	5¾	Feedback♦	6		...	-0.2
1270	463⅛	Gooch & Housego♦	1215	-5	1.1	88.7
28500	9020	Goodwin	20000	-650	1.4	61.1
4902	3194	**Halma**‡	3730	-66	0.7	37.8
3150	1951¾	Hill & Smith	3060	-35	1.7	29.8
2¾	1	Image Scan♦	2⅝		...	-12.4
3150	2205	**IMI**	3142	+6	1.1	25.3
7000	3480	Judges Sci.♦	4200	-50	2.7	50.8
90	34	LPA♦	82½		...	-31.2
685	409⅞	**Melrose**	489⅜	+4	1.5	16.9
258½	179¾	Morgan Advanced	255	+1	4.8	34.0
405	200	Mpac♦	330	+2½	...	-10.4
1800	1120	MS Intl♦	1585	-15	1.6	23.5
3318	1682	Oxford Instruments‡	2882	-6	0.8	34.1
2413⅜	1779⅛	Phillips Elec	1986⅜	-⅞	3.7	-46.5
4⅛	1	PipeHawk♦	2⅛		...	-3.0
5490	2915	Renishaw	5250	+15	1.5	45.6
1586	990	**Rolls-Royce**‡	1540	+10	0.7	22.2
489¼	286⅜	Rotork	486⅜	-⅝	1.7	35.2
105	60	SDI Group♦	91		...	19.4
318⅛	161	Senior	292½	+½	0.7	-286.8
2042¾	2025¼	SKF Group	2040⅜		3.0	30.4
2754⅛	2088	**Smiths**	2676	-22	1.7	31.2
215	135	Solid State♦	186		1.5	25.8
245	170	Somero Enter♦	232½		3.3	16.5
8050	5950	**Spirax Group**	7650	+150	2.2	34.5
7½	3½	Tanfield♦	4	+⅜	...	-3.9
334	240	Thorpe FW♦	254	-1	2.8	11.7
142¾	47	Transense Tech♦	48½		...	5.2
507½	350	Vesuvius	405¾	+⅜	5.8	19.2
710	325	Volex	557	+4	0.9	21.4
3580	2254	**Weir**	2758	+36	1.5	28.8
2060	843	XP Power	1776		...	-42.3

Health

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
284½	187	Advanced Medical♦	281		1.0	60.8
12⅛	5	Allergy Therapeutics♦	5½		...	-6.5
8	0⅞	CelLBxHealth♦	1⅜		...	-0.2
580	377½	Anpario♦	515	-15	2.4	12.8
15732	9892	**AstraZeneca**‡	11990	+94	2.0	24.6
3¾	1⅝	Cambridge Nutri Sci♦	1⅞		...	2.6
259¼	193	**Convatec**	233⅝	+1¼	2.4	36.7
36	20	Potter & Moore♦‡	23½		2.3	7.7
116⅞	72	Eco Animal Health♦	97	-1½	...	29.8
32	21¾	EKF Diagnostics♦	25½	-½	...	54.1
11	0¼	Futura Medical♦	0⅜		...	-0.1
3228¾	1943	Genus	2318	+14	1.4	79.1
2282	1288⅝	**GSK**	1927½	-33	3.6	13.7
0¼	0⅛	Gunsynd♦	0⅛		...	-2.1
416⅛	274⅜	**Haleon**	365¼	-4¼	2.0	19.6
1865	1187	Hikma Pharma	1649	-28	3.9	12.2
266	150½	Hutchmed China♦	190	+6	...	4.8
19⅜	1⅜	ImmuPharma♦	3¾	-¼	...	-10.1
32	12¼	Inspiration Health♦	18½		...	-15.9
15	6¼	IXICO♦	8		...	-4.3
1	0⅜	Thalia Therapeutics♦	0⅝		...	-4.0
77⅝	53⅞	NIOX Group♦	63	+¾	2.5	37.3
CHF131.50	95.59	Novartis	CHF126.80½	+0.82	2.9	41.4
962	423½	Oxford Biomedica	478½	-26½	...	-17.8
0¾	0¼	Physiomics♦	0½		...	-2.7
4⅜	1¼	Proteome Sciences♦	1¾		...	-1.7
6522⅞	3664	**Reckitt Benck**‡	5284	-22	4.1	11.3
27	10⅜	RUA Life Sci♦	24½	+½	...	-105.2
29	9½	Sareum Holdings♦	23		...	-9.6
1441½	1050	**Smith & Neph**	1105½	-7½	2.7	20.7
256½	140¾	Spire Healthcare	233	-1	0.6	56.8
14	5	Talisman Metals♦	6¼	-¼	...	1.8
0⅞	0⅛	ValiRx♦	0⅛		...	-0.3

Industrials

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
79⅞	58⅛	Accsys Tech♦	70	+1	...	30.7
4780½	3665⅛	BASF	4384⅝	-18⅛	4.4	28.2
4606¾	2195¾	Bayer	4213⅜	-60⅛	0.2	-13.4
98⅛	71	Coats Group	85⅜	-1	2.9	19.5
3352	2426¾	**Croda**	3292	+27	3.4	74.1
460	230	Cropper (James)♦	454	+4	...	14.7
195⅜	136	Elementis	186	-1¼	1.8	-32.2
110	6¼	Hardide♦	98½	-1½	...	...
3775	2095	International Paper	3040	-10	4.5	-7.6
2434	1731⅞	Johnson Matthey	2180	+12	3.5	-38.1
1085	660	Mondi	911¾	-9¾	1.3	28.5
169⅞	110	Robinson♦	127½	+2½	4.7	9.4
979½	597	Swire Pacific	976¾	+41⅝	3.9	47.7
12⅜	5½	Symphony Enviro♦	8¼		...	-7.6
124	16¾	Synthomer	112⅜	-9⅝	...	-1.2
2858¼	2026⅝	Takeda Pharma	2597⅜	-3⅛	3.7	-57.7
831	515	Victrex	819	-3	7.3	25.6
430	320	Wynnstay♦	375		4.8	38.0
479⅞	318½	Zotefoams	438½	+18½	1.8	9.5

Leisure

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
451	231	Accesso Tech♦	299½	-3½	...	14.5
260	160	Celtic♦	210	+5	...	5.9
221⅝	164	Domino's Pizza	200⅝	-4¾	5.7	13.3
997⅜	500⅜	**Entain**	542	-3	3.6	-5.2
72¼	19¾	Evoke	45½	+¼	...	-0.4
53	29	Gaming Realms♦	31½	-½	...	15.5
310	210	Heavitree♦	300		2.2	5.5
244	130	Heavitree A♦	225		2.9	4.2
$175.70	115.65	**InterCont'l Hotels**	$155.55	-2.45	1.2	31.7
301½	223½	Mitch & Butlers	280½	-2	...	9.4
297	129⅜	On The Beach	193	+3¼	2.1	35.1
155¾	86	Rank Group	99¾	-3⅛	3.0	10.5
219⅜	137¼	SSP	210⅝	-3⅝	2.1	-22.6
0⅝	0¼	Bow Street Group♦	0⅜		...	-0.3
824	530½	Wetherspoon JD	804½	-9½	1.5	13.4
3302	2098	**Whitbread**	2460	-57	3.9	20.0

Media

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
76⅛	51⅛	Aeorema Comms♦	60		4.4	47.7
29	18	Altitude Group♦	23½		...	-94.0
115	70¼	Arcontech Group♦	79½		5.0	11.3
838⅜	418⅝	**Autotrader**	520	-1	2.2	15.2
690	435	Bloomsbury Pub‡	643	-7	2.5	19.4
3½		Caledonian Hldgs♦	1½	-⅛	...	-0.1
60	40	Catalyst Media♦	42½		...	23.1
0⅝	0⅛	Catenai♦	0⅛		...	-3.1
22	9	Ebiquity♦	9⅜		...	-0.9
785½	262¼	Future	321¼	-8⅜	5.3	5.1
154	60⅝	GlobalData	85¾	-1	1.7	19.5
110	44	IG Design Group♦	101½	-½	1.0	-0.9
1000	719	**Informa**‡	890¼	-14¼	2.5	...
87⅜	65¾	ITV	71¾	-1¼	7.0	12.2
220	98½	ME Group	117⅜	-4¾	7.1	7.8
0⅛	0⅛	Mediazest♦	0⅛		...	12.9
27	12	Mission Group♦	18		...	-0.8
220¼	139¾	Mony Group‡	202	+⅝	6.3	13.2
2341⅜	1624⅜	News Corp A	2096⅞	-30⅛	0.7	...
2606⅞	1891½	News Corp B	2409⅜	-20¼	0.6	...
439½	217	Next 15 Group♦	317½	-9½	4.8	-10.6
1337	874¾	**Pearson**	1217½	-6½	2.1	23.7
4½	3	Primorus Inv♦	3⅜		...	5.0
75⅜	40⅛	Reach‡	42¼	-½	14.0	-1.0
59	40	React♦	40½		...	-27.9
3662	1991	**Relx**‡	2609	-18	2.6	23.2
822⅝	391⅜	Rightmove	476¾	+3¾	2.3	17.0
270	131	SpaceandPeople♦	137½		...	6.4
131	95⅝	STV Group	105	-1¾	...	-9.7
470	170½	System1 Group♦	325		1.8	31.2
4777⅝	4682	21st Cent Fox A	4682		0.9	...
3349⅛	3297⅞	21st Cent Fox B	3349⅛		1.3	...
369	230	Wilmington	282	+4	4.1	21.9
412⅝	218½	WPP	390⅞	-20½	3.8	7.8
71½	40	Zinc Media♦	57½	+1	...	-5.6

Natural Resources

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0⅛	0	ADM Energy‡	0		...	1.2
17⅞	8⅛	H-Power♦	10½	-⅝	...	-4.3
89⅜	36¾	Afentra♦	63½	+2⅞	...	-61.3
0	0	Arkadian Strat Metals♦	0		...	-1.1
0¼	0⅛	Alien Metals♦	0⅛		...	-12.9
2⅞	1	Aminex	1¼		...	-13.5
8924	3349⅞	Anglo Amer Plat	6586⅞	-14⅜	6.9	24.5
4239	2115	**Anglo Amer**	4042	+20	0.7	-16.5
435	155	Anglo Asian Mng♦‡	412½	-9½	0.7	36.0
4475	1978½	**Antofagasta**	4016	+35	1.2	40.3
1¼	0⅜	Arc Minerals♦	0⅝		...	-1.2
2⅜	1¼	Ariana Resources♦	1⅜	-⅛	...	-142.5
0⅞	0¼	Arkle Resources♦	0¾		...	-11.0
2¼	0⅞	Asiamet Resources♦	1½		...	-13.1
1094	440½	Atalaya Mine	992	+23½	0.9	19.1
4¾	2½	Beacon Energy♦	3		...	-0.7
13	4	Beowulf Mining♦	10		...	-3.0

PRICES

Major indices

New York	
Dow Jones	53975.98 (-60.95)
Nasdaq	26605.36 (-85.26)
S&P 500	7753.11 (-4.53)
Tokyo	
Nikkei 225	66970.22 (+1363.51)
Hong Kong	
Hang Seng	25937.49 (+269.46)
Amsterdam	
Amsterdam AEX	1113.35 (+1.88)
Sydney	
Australia AO	9424.10 (-21.00)
Frankfurt	
DAX	26323.88 (+4.43)
Singapore	
Singapore Straits	5698.43 (nc)
Brussels	
Brussels BEL20	5767.78 (-9.93)
Paris	
Paris CAC	8726.03 (+11.10)
Zurich	
Zurich SMI	14633.70 (+88.79)
Zurich DJ Euro Stoxx 50	6535.62 (+11.76)
London	
FTSE100	10862.50 (-38.59)
FTSE250	24744.54 (-110.32)
FTSE350	5920.02 (-21.61)
FTSE Eurotop 100	5124.28 (+12.28)
FTSE All Share	5855.29 (-21.25)
FTSE Non Financials	6405.14 (-26.07)
TechMark Focus	9589.92 (+14.33)
US$	1.3520 (+0.0032)
Euro	1.1704 (+0.0030)
SDR	0.9892 (+0.0027)
CPI Jun (2015=100)	142.5
RPI Jun (1987=100)	416.5
RPIX Jun (1987=100)	409.7

London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	26-Sep	87.59	87.62	86.88	86.98		1326874
	26-Dec	87.21	87.21	87.21	86.93		1739
	27-Mar				86.85		
3-Mth Sonia Index	26-Jun	96.2525	96.2525	96.25	96.25		401912
	26-Sep	96.16	96.16	96.135	96.14		428431
	26-Dec	95.975	95.975	95.925	95.935		530320
	27-Mar	95.85	95.85	95.77	95.78		391512
3 Mth Sonia Index	27-Jun	95.785	95.785	95.7	95.71		386226
	27-Sep	95.775	95.78	95.685	95.69		243887
	27-Dec	95.8	95.8	95.7	95.71		296028
3-Mth Euribor	26-Sep	97.43	97.435	97.405	97.415		665023
	26-Dec	97.295	97.295	97.25	97.255		947792
	27-Mar	97.19	97.195	97.13	97.14		476561
	27-Jun	97.145	97.145	97.07	97.085		485236
	27-Sep	97.14	97.14	97.055	97.07		432597
3-Mth Saron Index	26-Jun	100.0475	100.0475	100.0475	100.045		70455
	26-Sep	100.04	100.045	100.04	100.04		75554
	26-Dec	99.995	99.995	99.975	99.975		52533
	27-Mar	99.9	99.9	99.865	99.865		35584
	27-Jun	99.815	99.82	99.77	99.77		25301
	27-Sep	99.75	99.755	99.695	99.695		27215
	27-Dec	99.695	99.7	99.64	99.64		20874
FTSE100	26-Sep	10893	10906.5	10831.5	10871.5		479027
	26-Dec	10942.5	10942.5	10942.5	10939.5		799
FTSEurofirst 80	26-Sep				8896.8		
	26-Dec				8942.7		

Tradeweb

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Commodities

Natural Gas $
2.789 +0.127

Light Crude Oil
81.48 +3.29

Crude Oils ($/barrel FOB)
WTI SEP 26 81.54 3.36
WTI OCT 26 80.57 3.42
WTI NOV 26 79.4 3.44
WTI DEC 26 78.04 3.4
WTI JAN 27 76.8 3.3

Products
Fuel Oil 462.281 -1.362
Euro Naphtha 717.115 14.435

ICE Futures

Gas Oil
Aug1313.75-1313 Dec1062.75-1062.25
Sep1224.25-1223.75 Jan1026.25-1025.5
Oct1171.75-1171.25
Nov1117-1116.5 Volume: 260435

Brent
Oct87.08-87.07 Jan82.15-82.13
Nov85.32-85.31 Feb80.96-80.93
Dec83.58-83.56 Volume: 546474

Cocoa
Sep 4266 +17 Sep 4358 +7
Dec 4301 +17 Dec 4299 -16
Mar 4405 +25 Mar 4405 +25
May 4404 +18 May 4404 +18
Jul 4393 +10 Volume: 29646

Robusta Coffee
Sep 3810 +23 May3723 +32
Nov 3799 +32 Jul 3705 +31
Jan 3777 +33
May 3723 +32 Volume: 27571

White Sugar
Oct 505.8 +2.4 Aug 501.6 +4
Dec 505.8 +2.6 Oct 496.6 +3.7
May 507.9 +4.3
May 507.9 +4.3 Volume: 45721

London Grain Futures

LIFFE Wheat (close £/t)
Nov198.25 -1.25 May206 +0.25
Jan 201.25 Jul 208
Mar 203.5 Volume: 8370

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0⅛	0	Bezant Resources♦	0⅛		...	9.7
3495	1918	BHP Group	3351	+ 5	3.1	25.5
14	7⅝	Border & Sthn Pet♦	10⅞		...	-91.7
122½	10½	Bougainville	10¾		...	-16.0
609⅜	399¾	**BP**	524⅝	+ 7⅜	4.7	...
0	0	Buccaneer Energy♦	0		...	-0.6
8¼	1¾	Cadence Minerals♦	5	- ⅛	...	-9.5
5½	3	Cadogan Energy	3¾		...	-11.3
2900	1250	Caledonia Mining♦	1650	+ 35	2.5	7.9
3⅜	1¾	Caspian Sunrise#	1⅞		...	3.5
244	125¼	Cent Asia Metals♦	152	- 2⅝	7.9	-4.8
2¼	1⅛	Chariot Ltd♦	1½	+ ⅛	...	...
0	0	Clontarf Energy♦	0		...	-6.3
0½	0¼	Corcel♦	0⅜		...	-2.1
18½	8	Crism Therapeutics♦	10	+ ½	...	-2.0
300½	108⅛	DRD Gold	176⅝	- ⅜	2.3	14.8
0½	0⅛	ECR Minerals♦	0⅛		...	-3.0
0⅛	0	Empyrean Energy♦	0		...	-0.5
5620	2390	**Endeavour**	4074	+ 28	3.2	19.7
28	9¾	EnQuest	24	+ 1⅛	3.3	...
6	2	Eurasia Mining♦	2⅜		...	15.7
2⅜	0⅝	Europa Oil & Gas♦	2⅛	+ ¼	...	-10.3
87¼	27¼	Ferrexpo#	28⅝		...	-4.5
4472	1617	**Fresnillo**	2963	+ 99	3.8	21.3
80	3	Galantas Gold♦	25	+ ½	...	-6.8
12½	2⅞	GCM Resources♦	3⅜		...	-4.9
7½	2½	Gem Diamonds	4		...	-0.1
3⅜	1⅝	Getech♦	3⅛		...	-7.4
707¼	281⅞	**Glencore**	568¾	+ 11¾	2.2	...
0½	0⅛	Geo Exploration♦	0⅛		...	-4.5
4582¾	2310¼	Gold Fields	3035⅛	- 6⅝	3.8	...
21	6½	Goldplat♦	18¼	- ¼	2.9	30.4
2	0¼	Goldstone Res♦	0⅝		...	-0.9
800	230	Greatland Resources♦	645	+ 4	...	19.4
353¾	176	Griffin Mining♦	293½	+ ½	...	32.8
235	160⅝	Gulf Keystone	177	+ 2⅝	7.2	34.3
858	246¼	Hochschild	514	+ 4½	0.9	17.8
553	294	Hunting	451½	+ 8½	2.1	23.3
0⅛	0	Ironveld♦	0		...	-2.1
219¾	57⅞	ITM Power♦	112¼	+ 2⅜	...	-15.2
5¼	2¼	Jubilee Metals♦	2¾	+ ¼	...	-3.8
1⅛	0⅜	Karel Diamond Res♦	0⅝		...	-4.0
2⅛	0½	KEFI Gold and Copper♦	1¼		...	-10.9
345	178⅜	Kenmare Res	204	- 6	...	-0.8
5⅞	1¾	Landore Res♦	1¾		...	-1.8
0⅛	0⅛	Lansdowne Resources♦	0⅛		...	-1.6
4⅞	2⅝	Lexington Gold♦	2⅞		...	-29.6
19¼	10¼	Metals Exploration♦	13¾	- ¼	...	17.7
0⅞	0⅛	Nativo Resources♦	0⅛		...	-0.1
4½	1	Nostrum Oil & Gas	4	+ ⅜	...	-0.0
0⅝	0⅛	Oriole Resources♦	0⅜		...	-16.8
		Ormonde Mining			...	...
41	11	Orosur Mining♦	15¼	- ¾	...	...
190⅜	59¾	Pan African Res	109⅞	+ ⅛	2.0	20.8
33¼	6¾	Pantheon Res♦	13	- ⅞	...	-46.3
27	12½	Parkmead Group♦	21½		...	3.2
22⅝	5¾	Petra Diamonds	6½		...	-0.2
1⅛	0½	Petrel Resources♦	0⅞		...	-4.0
1⅝	0⅝	Petro Matad♦	1		...	-4.6
8⅞	2¾	Plexus Holdings♦	3¾	+ ½	...	-1.4
938	672	Porvair‡	892	- 8	0.8	22.7

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
5⅛	2⅛	Prospex Energy♦	3¼	+ ⅛	...	-4.9
5	0⅞	Quadrise♦	1⅛		...	-6.3
160	35	Reabold Resources♦	63½	- 1½	...	-793.8
0	0	Red Rock Res♦	0		...	-0.3
10416¼	5324⅛	Rio Tinto Ltd	9353¾	+ 52⅞	3.7	17.8
9117	4436½	**Rio Tinto**	7510	- 18	4.6	16.5
0½	0⅛	Rome Resources♦	0⅜		...	-15.4
375	184¼	Serabi Gold♦	312	- 6	1.6	5.9
302⅜	146	Serica Energy♦	239⅜	+ 9¾	6.7	-24.9
3758½	2553¾	**Shell**	3298	+ 20½	4.6	14.7
7	2¼	Shuka Minerals♦	2¾		...	-2.1
13	1½	Sound Energy♦	1⅝		...	-1.5
27	5½	Star Energy♦	23	- 1	...	-4.1
4½	0⅞	Sunda Energy♦	1⅜		...	-1.4
0	0	Sunrise Resources♦	0		...	-3.3
0		Synergia Energy♦	0		...	0.5
0⅛	0	Tertiary Minerals♦	0⅛		...	-6.5
0⅞	0½	Thor Energy♦	0½		...	-0.5
7066	4293½	Total Eng SE	6453⅞	+ 107⅝	4.6	12.7
0	0	Tower Resources♦	0		...	-0.4
19½	3½	Tullow Oil	14⅜	+ ⅜	...	48.5
0	0	UK Oil & Gas♦	0		...	-0.2
13	2⅝	URU Metals♦	4		...	-2.7
0⅜	0⅛	Vast Resources#	0⅛		...	-0.5
9	1⅜	Westmount Energy♦	3⅛		...	-8.3
1½	0½	Xtract Resources♦	1¼		...	-5.4
4⅜	2¼	Zephyr Energy♦	3¼		...	-7.6

Professional & Support Services

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
5135	2980	4imprint	4888	- 36	3.7	16.3
615	464	Andrews Sykes♦	597½	+ 22½	4.3	13.8
130	103½	BTG Consulting♦	107	- ½	4.3	20.2
2886	1981	**Bunzl**	2826	- 44	2.6	20.0
416	215	Capita	264½	+ ½	...	-1.8
49⅞	25	CEPS♦	40	+ 1	...	-11.4
165	90	Christie Group♦	152½		2.3	30.0
2581⅛	2000	**Compass**	2375¾	- 10¾	2.1	29.2
87	64½	Croma Security♦	70		3.4	12.2
6740	4188	**DCC Energy**	6375		3.4	...
34	15	Diales Grp♦	32		4.7	24.6
7765	4970	**Diploma**	7580	- 120	0.8	55.0
840	505	DiscoverIE	818	- 15	1.6	27.1
115¼	78⅜	Essentra	111¾	- 2¼	1.9	...
3987	2203	**Experian**	2876	- 21	1.8	23.6
330	110	FIH Group♦	147½	+ 2½	4.6	-3.6
850	588	Hargreaves Servs♦	796	- 2	5.0	8.5
5855	3519⅜	**Intertek**	5840		2.8	26.8
250¾	163½	Int'l Workplace	185¾	- 3⅞	0.5	...
172⅛	123¾	Johnson Service	146⅞	- 1½	3.3	15.8
554	360	Journeo♦	498	+ 3	...	20.5
254½	178⅝	Kier Group	249⅝	- 1	3.1	19.5
1170	910	Latham (J)♦‡	1035		3.5	11.2
3700	2100	London Security♦	3650	+ 50	2.7	18.8
298	204	LSL Property Servs	259	+ 1	4.4	15.6
100½	59¾	Macfarlane	75	+ 2	4.9	18.8
190	65	Maintel Holdings♦	65½	+ ½	...	-5.6
28	15¼	Malvern Intl♦	21½		...	-2.8
460	310	Mears Group	448	- 7	4.0	8.0
282¼	101¼	Michael Page	194	- ¼	2.4	66.9
214	134¾	Mitie Group‡	206⅜	+ ¼	2.2	31.3
15¾	0¾	MobilityOne#	6¾		...	-2.1
137	71⅛	Newmark Security♦	110		...	15.6
260	170	Norman Broadbent♦	185		...	5.8
158	84⅞	Northern Bear♦	123		6.1	4.1
187½	110	NWF Group♦	153	- 1	5.7	8.2

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
62	42	PCI-PAL♦	60½	+ ½	...	...
12½	7	Petards♦	10¼		...	-15.3
12⅞	7	PHSC♦	7¾		...	-2.6
0¾	0⅛	PowerHouse Energy♦	0¼		...	-3.1
64	41⅜	Record	45¼	+ 1¼	8.0	11.5
978	772	Renew Holdings♦	916	- 8	2.2	14.9
507	329⅝	**Rentokil**	360¼	+ ¼	2.6	26.2
310	222	Restore♦	301	- ½	2.4	-64.0
7	1½	River Global A♦‡	2½		...	-0.3
30	13⅝	Roebuck Food Group♦	26		...	-9.0
752½	536⅞	RS Group	735	- 8½	3.1	21.2
150	85	RTC Group♦	90		7.5	6.4
120	68	RWS Holdings♦	117⅜	- ⅝	5.4	-4.3
612	520	Science Group♦	583	- 2	1.7	7.8
325¾	212¾	Serco	264¼	- 1⅝	1.8	18.4
79⅜	54	Smiths News	71⅜		7.8	6.1
30	13¼	Software Circel♦	16		...	-76.2
52½	36⅝	Staffline Group♦	45	+ 1¼	...	11.5
288½	132¼	SThree	282½	- 3	5.1	20.6
350	146	Synectics♦	195	+ 10	2.6	8.9
2	0½	Thruvision Group♦	0⅞	+ ¼	...	-0.8
74	46	Tribal♦	63⅜	+ ⅜	2.1	15.1
84¼	58	Vianet♦	66		3.6	46.2
490	294½	ZIGUP	467½	+ ½	5.8	13.9

Retailing

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
117⅜	82½	AO World	98½	- ⅛	...	15.5
269¼	140	B&M European	231	- 4	4.2	14.2
115¾	58¼	Card Factory	75⅛	- 1¼	6.7	8.3
1648	1062	CVS Group	1290	- 10	0.7	17.5
204	113	DFS Furniture	158	+ 4½	0.6	15.0
1248	707	Dunelm	891½	- 3½	7.9	11.5
840	598	Frasers Group	802	- 6½	...	9.3
2046	1407¼	Greggs	1903	- 15	3.6	15.9
250	123¾	Halfords	242	- 4	3.7	15.9
981	713	**Howden Joinery**	831	- 9	2.6	16.9
895	640½	Inchcape‡	831½	- 6	4.0	11.5
1⅜	0⅜	Imaging Biometrics	0⅝	- ⅛	...	-4.0
106⅛	64	**JD Sports**	94⅛	- ⅞	1.3	10.9
372¼	240¼	**Kingfisher**	320¼	- 7¼	3.9	22.9
418⅜	301⅛	**Marks & Spencer**	403½	- 5¼	1.0	31.8
4	0⅝	Mothercare♦	1		...	0.9
93¼	61¾	Naked Wines♦	72	- 1⅜	...	-7.8
15900	11200	**Next**	15630	- 55	1.7	20.6
397⅞	140¼	Ocado	213⅝	- 1¼	...	4.5
241⅝	167¼	Pets at Home	209	- 2¾	3.5	15.1
575	200	Pinewood Tech Group	429	- 1	...	89.4
747	175⅜	Saga	708	- 30	...	...
380¼	292¼	**Sainsbury's**	351¼	- 1⅞	3.9	20.3
1120	378⅝	WH Smith	443¼	- 9¼	...	-4.0
14	4½	Sosandar♦	13		...	92.9
510⅜	406⅞	**Tesco**	468⅝	- 6½	3.1	17.0
50	30¼	Topps Tiles	35¾	- ⅜	8.7	11.7

Technology

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
252	140⅜	Alfa Financial	161	- 5¼	6.0	15.8
307	195	Aptitude Software	198		2.7	27.1
129	55	Bango♦	61½	- 1	...	-8.4
20	12	BATM Adv Coms	12⅞	+ ¼	...	-4.1
33	19⅞	Berkeley Res	24½	- ½	...	-64.2
3¼	1¼	Blackbird♦	1½		...	-2.4
194	74	Celebrus Tech♦‡	106½		3.2	-119.0
28	12½	Cirata♦	13⅝	+ ¼	...	-3.1
0⅜	0⅛	CloudCoCo♦	0⅛		...	0.4
4962	2234	**Computacenter**	4852	+ 24	1.5	33.1
286	173½	Concurrent Tech♦	247½	- 2½	0.5	42.2
13½	7½	Corero♦	8¾		...	-118.3
2644	988	Craneware♦	1300	- 18	2.6	31.3
110	50	Crimson Tide♦	87½		...	20.8
9⅞	5¾	CyanConnode Hldgs♦	9¾		...	-8.4
15½	8	Dillistone Group♦	11¼	+ ¼	...	-7.7

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0⅝	0	Forgent♦	0		...	-0.0
165¾	94½	FDM Group	112	+ ¾	6.2	21.5
480	114	Filtronic♦	257	+ 13	...	...
265	180⅝	GB Group	234½	- 3	1.9	-7.6
51	24	Ilika♦	25½	- ¼	...	-6.3
138	56	Ingenta♦	67	- ½	6.7	5.6
178	73	Intercede♦	117	- 1	...	20.5
28½	11⅛	Iomart♦	12⅞	+ ⅜	...	-1.6
72⅞	4⅝	IQE♦	46½	- ½	...	-12.3
4453½	912⅝	LG Electronics	1457⅛	- 3⅜	1.7	...
79	37	MTI Wireless♦	64½		3.2	14.9
14¼	2	Nanoco Group	2½	+ ⅛	...	-2.2
138	94⅛	Netcall♦	118		0.8	48.2
36	22	Northamber♦	24½		2.4	-1.7
60⅜	37½	Oxford Metrics♦	38½	+ ¼	8.4	-70.0
31	17	Pennant Intl♦	29		...	-5.8
447	210	Playtech	377¼	+ 9¾	...	0.9
50	33⅛	Pulsar Group♦	34	- 1	...	-4.3
570¼	398½	QinetiQ‡	563½	+ 10	2.0	28.0
117	88	RM	100	+ 2	...	38.5
6½	2⅜	Seeing Machines♦	4¾	+ ⅛	...	-11.6
69½	35½	Shearwater Group♦	61½		...	-1.5
2012	1083	Softcat	1995	+ 1	1.5	30.0
50	5	Sorted Group#	9		...	-0.2
1018½	561	Tele Ericsson	746⅜	- 4⅜	3.1	11.2
1200	771⅝	**The Sage Grp**	1044	- 4½	2.2	27.7
91⅝	52½	Touchstar♦‡	82½		3.9	-6.2
435	280	Tracsis♦	320	+ 10	0.8	...
410	230	Triad Group‡	400	+ 5	2.2	40.3
330	210	Water Intel♦	306	- 1½	...	14.4
150	96⅜	Xaar	118½	- ½	...	-27.6
17	8½	Zoo Digital♦	12	+ ½	...	-4.3

Telecoms

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
436¼	206	**Airtel Africa**	322⅜	- 7	1.6	23.4
242⅛	173	**BT Group**‡	195	- 4¼	4.3	17.7
169½	106	Currys	159¾	- 2¼	1.9	10.3
1186	687	Gamma Comms	973½	- 14½	2.3	14.0
247⅝	118	Helios Towers‡	199⅝	- 3	0.9	72.9
0⅜	0⅛	Gana Media♦	0⅛		...	-3.4
1920	638	Telecom Plus‡	851	- 6	5.9	8.4
131⅛	83⅜	**Vodafone**	116¾	- 3¾	3.4	-82.9

Transport

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
260	203⅛	Braemar‡	220	- 5	3.2	30.4
5485	3365	Clarkson	4902	+ 62	2.3	22.9
683¾	332⅝	EasyJet	675	+ 4	2.0	10.3
237⅝	152⅛	FirstGroup	184¼	+ ⅝	3.9	8.6
554	320	Fisher (James)	475	- 6	...	-54.6
492⅞	332¾	**Intl Cons Air**	436¼	- 6⅛	1.6	7.2
685	458	Irish Cont	665		2.1	16.7
38⅛	17	Mobico Group	25¼	- ⅜	...	-1.1
7	1⅝	Sutton Harbour♦	4¼		...	-0.4
1453	832	Wizz Air	1082	- 13	...	...

Utilities

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
220¼	151½	**Centrica**	153⅝	- ⅝	3.7	-102.4
937½	613⅞	Drax Group	728½	+ 10½	4.2	35.2
485	420	Jersey Electricity	435	- 5	5.0	12.1
1428½	1000	**National Grid**	1175½	- 24½	4.1	17.9
606	439⅜	Pennon‡	467⅞	- 2⅜	6.3	24.1
3335	2381	**Severn Trent**	3098	- 44	4.1	25.1
2767½	1597	**SSE**‡	2378	- 12	2.9	22.5
1497	1072	**United Utilities**	1415	- 21	3.8	16.4

INVESTMENT COMPANIES

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
4497	1825	**3i Group**	2803	- 64	3.0	5.2
394½	325	3i Infrastructure	384	- ½	3.5	12.0
1758	1408⅛	Aberforth Smlr‡	1730	- 2	2.8	27.0
1391	1178	**Alliance Witan**	1386	+ 2	2.1	74.9
400	321	Artemis UK Future Lead‡	400	+ 3	3.9	32.3
220	116⅜	Athelney Trust	165		6.1	14.5
273	235⅛	AVI Global	262½	- 3½	1.7	51.8
194	154½	AVI Japan	169	- 1½	1.3	57.5
331	263	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	314	+ ½	0.8	...
126½	91⅜	Baillie Gifford Eur Gr	126	+ 1	0.6	...
1086	811⅛	Baillie Gifford Jpn	1068	- 10	0.9	...
173⅜	123	Baillie Gifford SN	171	- 1	0.4	...
231	180⅛	Baillie Gifford UK Gr	230		2.7	36.9
153⅝	121⅜	Bankers Invstmt Tst‡	151¾	- ⅜	1.9	67.5
445	385	BH Macro GBP	420	+ ½	...	19.8
1718	809	Biotech Growth	1696	+ 4	...	-892.6
289½	197	BlckRck Amer Inc	288	+ 1	5.2	...
205	118½	BlckRck Eng&Res Inc	183	+ 2½	3.2	52.3
208	162½	BlckRck Fro Inv	193	+ ½	3.9	25.7
625	507	BlackRock Grt Euro	613	- 1	1.2	89.0
238	200	BlckRck Inc&Grth‡	231	+ 2	3.3	32.0
288⅜	230¾	BlckRck Smlr‡	282	- 1	2.8	32.2
1072⅞	543⅛	BlckRck Wld Min	986	+ 4	2.4	41.0
1665	1274	Brown Adv US Sm	1610	- 22½	...	-268.8
1584	1336	Brunner‡	1566	+ 2	1.7	56.2
395	312	Caledonia Inv	393	+ 7	2.0	51.0
599	486	City of Lon IT‡	593	- 4	3.7	27.5
155⅜	86	Crystal Amber Fd	88½		-64.1	...
592	439⅞	CT Priv Eq Ord	508	- 4	5.6	...
373	320	CT UK Cap & Inc	364	+ 1	3.7	30.0
120	92	CT UK HIT B	112		5.3	23.1
126	97	CT UK HIT	124	+ 6	4.8	25.6
480¼	460	Dunedin Ent#	475		...	...
861	737⅝	Edinburgh IT	854	- 7	3.7	32.1
294½	186¾	Edin Wwide	253	+ 5½	...	-227.9
1332	325⅞	**F&C Inv Trust**	342	- 1⅜	1.2	76.1
672	546	Fidlty Asian Val	606	- 6	3.4	26.9
339	241	Fidelity China Sp	268	+ ½	3.4	29.1
1574	816	FdityEmrgMkt	1412	- 20	1.4	61.6
444½	367½	Fidelity European Trust	442	- 1	2.2	39.1
476	372	Fidlty Spec Val	473	- 2	2.2	38.5
915	706¼	Fins Gwth & Inc	821	- 5	2.5	43.4
85⅝	69¾	GCP Infrastructure‡	81¾		8.6	38.0
370	316	Global Opps Tst	333½	+ 3½	3.1	42.8
103	99	Golden Prospect‡	101		-15.1	...
68⅞	57⅛	Greencoat Renew	66⅞	+ ¾	-16.7	...
118⅞	92¼	Greencoat UK Wind	114½	+ ½	9.3	-13.1
344	250	Hansa Investment Co‡	338	+ 4	1.3	76.8
332	244	Hansa Inv Co A‡	324	+ 3	1.4	73.6
3480	2710	Hbrvest Glbl Pt Eq	3435	- 15	...	-58.1
214	173¼	Hend High Inc	210		5.3	18.6
998	769	Hend Smlr	997	+ 6	2.9	38.2
3290¾	2285	Herald Inv Trust	3030	- 5	...	...
524	318⅝	HgCapital Trust	396		1.3	...
141	107¼	HICL Infra	138	- 1	6.2	10.0
1611⅜	1288¼	ICG Ent Tr	1480	+ 2	2.8	-416.9
494¾	379	Impax Env Mkts	442	+ 2	1.2	89.5

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
519	368⅜	Invesco Asia Dragon Tr	490½	- 2	3.9	49.9
178½	150⅛	Invesco Bond Inc‡	170½		7.2	13.0
427	318	Invesco Glbl Eq Inc‡	420	- 1	3.8	83.8
1258	1041	JPM American	1246	- 4	0.9	...
652	393	JPM Asia Gro & Inc‡	570		5.5	...
313	250½	JPM China‡	281½	+ 4½	4.8	72.4
986	788	JPM Claverhs‡	980	- 4	3.7	29.1
310	181⅝	JPM Emrg EMEA Sec	247½	+ 7½	0.2	...
181¼	118⅜	JPM Em Mkts‡	161¾	- 1⅝	4.7	70.3
666	548	JPMorgan Euro	630	- 4	2.5	34.7
221	145	JPM Em Mkts Div Inc	203	- 2	3.0	35.7
641	529⅝	JPM GG&I	637½	- 1	3.9	77.1
1098	799	JPM India‡	892	- 12	5.0	...
850	655	JPM Japan	840	+ 3	1.0	82.8
463	365	JPM Smllr Co	449½	- 2	0.7	...
1290	977⅜	Law Debenture	1268	- 8	2.9	34.0
190	143	Lowland Inv	189	+ 1	3.6	28.1
137⅝	137	Marwyn Val Inv‡	138½		15.3	...
289	234¼	Mercantile IT	285½	- 2½	2.9	30.9
687	536	Merchants Trust‡	680	- 5	4.4	22.2
804	682	Mid Wynd	794		1.1	...
1664	1360	Monks Inv Trust‡	1630	+ 10	0.1	...
189	142	Montanaro Eur Sml‡	179	+ 2	0.9	92.3
1036	854⅝	Murray Income Trust‡	1014	- 2	4.0	26.3
372½	287	Murray Intl‡	371	+ 1	3.5	26.7
437	345	Pacific Assets Trust	421	- 1	1.4	75.2
409	319½	Pantheon Intl	403	+ 3	...	...
5095	3636	**Pershing Sqr**	3912		1.4	3.8
557	508	Personal Assets	557	+ 2	1.0	92.4
743½	384	**Polar CapTech**	660	- 4	...	-785.7
82⅝	63¼	Renewables Infra	77⅛	- 1	9.8	-14.3
2645	1932	RIT Cap Ptnr	2625	- 5	1.7	...
990⅝	490	Riverstone	603	+ 1	...	-375.7
738	488¾	Schroder TotRt	698	+ 1	1.6	71.2
892	598	Schrd Asia Pac	817	- 2	1.6	61.8
378¾	310	Schrod Inc Gwth	375		3.9	29.9
401	270½	Schrod Jap Gwth	389	- 4	3.1	56.3
782	652	Schrod UKMid	782	+ 2	2.9	31.2
17¾	12¾	Schroder UK PP Tr	17¼	+ ¼	...	-71.9
572	480⅛	Scot American	567	- 3	2.9	36.2
1563	1015¾	**Scot Mortgage**	1404½	+ 8	0.3	...
88	75½	Sequoia Eco‡	86¾		7.9	12.7
253	215⅞	STS Glbl Inc Grwth	233	+ 1	3.6	35.9
352	196⅝	Temp Emg Mkt	311	- 1	1.7	57.7
429½	330⅝	Temple Bar	426½	- 2½	3.7	30.9
198⅝	162¾	The Glbl Smaller‡	194⅝	- 1¼	1.6	66.0
9	0⅜	Potentially AI	6¾		-1.7	...
364½	291	TR Property	313½	- 2½	5.1	19.8
197	194¾	UIL	192½		19.0	...
302	243	Utilico Emerging Mkt‡	290		3.3	21.4
865	682	Vietnam Ent Inv	724	+ 8	...	4.7
398	306½	Ww Health	388½	+ 4½	0.6	...

♦AIM company; # Price at suspension; † Ex dividend; ‡ Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; * figures or report awaited; . . . No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index. Investment Cos sector Nav Dis or Prm supplied by ICE Data Services.

Exchange rates

Australia $	1.9143 (+0.00545)
Canada $	1.88393 (+0.00355)
Denmark Kr	8.75165 (+0.02675)
Euro	1.1705 (+0.0036)
Hong Kong $	10.61 (+0.028)
Hungary	425.68 (+2.19)
Indonesia	24046.31 (-99.89)
Israel	4.0573 (+0.0065)
Japan Yen	214.942 (+2.07)
New Zealand $	2.2964 (+0.0075)
Norway Kr	12.82098 (-0.00792)
Poland	5.03391 (+0.02091)
Russia	111.597 (+1.087)
S Africa	21.86933 (+0.13213)
Sweden Kr	12.8272 (+0.0509)
Switzerland Fr	1.09401 (+0.0044)
Turkey Lira	64.5313 (+0.1797)
USA $	1.3526 (+0.0038)

Gold/precious metals

(US dollars per ounce)

Bullion: Open $4348.554

Close $ **High** $4362.03

Low $4313.52

AM $4340.50 **PM** $4324.45

Platinum $1743.400

Silver $63.602

Palladium $1373.251

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks: 3.75%
ECB Refi 2.40%
Fed Fund 3.5-3.75%
Halifax Mortgage Rate (SVR) 7.24%

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.7519	8.7288	-158.141	-419.267
Euro	1.1705	1.1673	-16.04	-42.28
Montreal	1.8839	1.8808	-27.1	-77.24
New York	1.3526	1.3488	-0.55	-0.675
Oslo	12.8237	12.8345	40.07	137.09
Tokyo	214.9310	212.8800	-55.02	-155.7
Zurich	1.0940	1.0899	-39.42	-110.89

Other sterling

Argentine peso	2026.47949-2026.48145
Australian dollar	1.91437-1.91448
Bahrain dinar	0.50890-0.51090
Brazilian real	6.89690-6.89890
Euro	1.17050-1.17130
Hong Kong dollar	10.61000-10.61400
Indian rupee	128.99770-129.07770
Indonesian rupiah	24046.31055-24086.31055
Kuwaiti dinar	0.41710-0.41910
Malaysian ringgit	5.53110-5.53310
New Zealand dollar	2.29633-2.29658
Singaporean dollar	1.73087-1.73172
South African rand	21.86924-21.88090
UAE dirham	4.96730-4.96930

Dollar rates

Australia	1.41480-1.41560
Canada	1.39295-1.39298
Denmark	6.47102-6.47109
Euro	0.86540-0.86580
Hong Kong	7.84551-7.84562
Japan	158.90900-158.91400
Malaysia	4.08800-4.09300
Norway	9.48080-9.48350
Singapore	1.27987-1.28005
Sweden	9.48189-9.48786
Switzerland	0.80894-0.80898

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Headhunter and chairman of the Royal Ballet School
David Norman
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Register

Obituaries

Tony Ridley

Urban transport 'maestro' behind the Tyne and Wear Metro who resigned from London Underground after the King's Cross fire

The continuing travails of HS2 demonstrate how Kafkaesque building British transport infrastructure projects has become.

The civil engineer Tony Ridley not only won government funding for a metro system in Newcastle and Sunderland but three years after presenting the plans in 1971, spades were in the ground and the Tyne and Wear Metro opened to the public in 1980.

"We took the whole scheme from a line on a map to digging the first tunnels in a three-year period. You couldn't do that today," said Ridley, whose reputation as the country's leading urban transport supremo would later be tarnished by his resignation as the managing director of London Underground after the King's Cross fire in November 1987.

In 1968 the Labour transport minister Barbara Castle had created passenger transport executives (PTEs). Appointed director general of the Tyneside PTE, Ridley read in the small print of her legislation hints that the government might fund metropolitan public transport projects if the case was well argued with robust cost-benefit analysis. "We were blessed with a minister who saw clearly that well-conceived objectives, policy statements and plans are most often central to success," said Ridley, who was described in a Times profile as having the "appearance of a slightly disorganised prep school master".

The 35-year-old Ridley's appointment in 1969 had caused considerable surprise. Having been working as chief research officer on highways and transportation for the Greater London council, he was labelled a "town clerk" by a local newspaper. Yet the Sunderland-born son of a mining engineer had already accrued plenty of "muddy boots" engineering experience from his work on soil mechanics through to nuclear power stations.

Ridley was given a relatively unambitious brief to merge three loss-making bus companies, but was soon working up plans to take "clapped-out" diesel-powered rail lines and link them using city centre tunnels and a bridge over the River Tyne.

With a PhD in transport-funding evaluation from the University of California, he sold it to the politicians by promising to reorganise the local bus network to create interchanges with the rail system, ending up with effectively the first integrated transport system in the UK. Local politicians of all stripes, who Ridley recalled "used to fight like cats and dogs", united in support of the project to get "something out of London for the northeast".

However, British Rail, which operated some of the failing lines, did not take the proposal seriously. "They saw us a small band of schoolboys and did nothing about it," Ridley recalled. But when "BR started to put forward an alternative proposal for the lines it was too late".

Instead, Ridley wrangled £50 million from the government and £25 million from the local council for a 44-station metro system with electrically powered trains that ran on their own track, in the process leapfrogging Manchester. "We snatched the opportunity and built the first new urban railway in Britain for decades," Ridley said. "Once people had seen us do it, a lot of cities thought we'd like some of that." Today the Tyne and Wear Metro has 60 stations, carries more than 100,000 passengers a day and is still expanding.

TONY WEAVER/ANL/SHUTTERSTOCK EDITORIAL

Ridley became head of London Underground in 1980 after five years overseeing the construction of Hong Kong's MTR metro system, left

As construction began in 1974, Ridley was headhunted to be managing director of Hong Kong's Mass Transit Railway (MTR), overseeing the five-year construction of what would become one of the world's busiest and most profitable metros, which helped to pay for itself with the brokering of lucrative property developments at the stations — now common practice. "MTR epitomised the importance of clear objectives," Ridley said. "It was a project with a champion, an excellent and intelligent client, attention to good process and decision-making, strong team spirit and sense of responsibility. Thus we were able to manage great complexity."

He had therefore earned his tag as an "urban transport maestro" when in 1980 he was appointed chief executive of London Underground, where his proudest achievement was arguing successfully that the Docklands Light Railway, built between 1985 and 1987, should be independent of the London Underground. "What we did not want was a modern railway with the staff management and union attitudes of London Underground," he recalled ruefully. At London Underground, he took on responsibility for a creaking, declining Victorian network of Tube tunnels that in some areas had a 50-year backlog of maintenance. Over his period in charge there was a surge in passenger numbers, up from 420 million in 1982 to 800 million a year by 1987.

Ridley's aim was to cut staff from 23,500 to 16,500 and introduce driverless trains. He was also planning extensions for the Bakerloo, East London, Jubilee and Metropolitan Lines. In September 1987 he launched a ten-year strategy, including expanding capacity through central London's overcrowded stations by building Crossrail (now the Elizabeth Line).

Momentum came to an abrupt halt when a fire at King's Cross Station on November 18, 1987, killed 31 people after a lit match was dropped through a crack under the wooden escalator and rubbish underneath caught fire, which rapidly spread.

It was the worst accident on the network since the Moorgate Tube crash in 1975, in which the deaths of 43 people are thought to have been caused by driver error. Other than that, only four people had been killed in 43 years as a result of accidents on the network.

Ridley subsequently claimed that London Underground had been doing a lot to make the network safer, particularly by tackling overcrowding at the busiest stations and replacing old signalling. In giving evidence to the public inquiry in 1988, he said that management had been focused on modernising an "aged, ineffective and fairly tatty" system into one that could carry a record number of passengers. If fire safety had been prioritised it would have been "at the expense of other safety measures".

He surprised Desmond Fennell QC, who was leading the inquiry, by suggesting it would be "wholly unrealistic" to expect fires not to occur on the London Underground and that they were an "occupational hazard". Fennell was "troubled" by Ridley's response. Yet after further questioning, Ridley's calm, studious demeanour began to crack and he finally admitted: "There were inadequacies in our performance at the highest level. There was inadequate reporting to us." After hearing evidence for 91 days, in November 1988 Fennell's report criticised the lack of a fire safety culture at London Underground and poor fire training for staff. Management were described as "complacent".

Ridley was determined not to resign, but was persuaded to do so after the report's publication. He devoted a chapter of his later book *Engineering in Perspective* to "management after a disaster".

If he thought becoming joint managing director of Eurotunnel, the Anglo-French consortium building the Channel Tunnel, would also help to shore up his reputation, it didn't. His brief was to oversee boring of the running tunnels beneath the Channel, but Ridley was caught between his chief executive Alastair Morton, who was "going to war" with the contractors building the tunnel, and the contractors who expected Ridley to rein Morton in. The resulting chaos jeopardised the project and Ridley left after little more than a year.

He later wrote that the Channel Tunnel was "well engineered" and "a good service", "but it is not an example of good engineering in the broad sense of the definition. It finished late and cost too much and the revenue forecasts were disastrous. The client was created much too late."

His biggest career lesson, he wrote, was that "there's more to engineering than engineering". "Engineering was far too often treated in its 'techie' context, with the result that engineers both failed to deliver as much as they might have done, and were less influential in society than they might and should have been ... Those who devote their lives to engineering are likely to find themselves in contact with almost every phase of human activity."

Tony Melville Ridley was born in Castletown, Sunderland, in 1933 to Jack Ridley, a mining engineer, and Olive (née Armstrong). He was educated at Durham School, where he excelled at maths, and went on to study civil engineering at King's College, Newcastle, before obtaining a master's from the Northwestern University in Illinois, and a doctorate in transport engineering at the University of California at Berkeley.

He had a spell working as a soil mechanic and foundations engineer in the US before returning to Britain determined to be involved "with whatever was modern and the latest". Deciding it was nuclear power stations, he wrote to Sir Claude Gibb, the chairman of the Nuclear Power Plant Company, and was given a job. Five years later, he returned to California for three years to teach at Berkeley, before being appointed chief research officer, highways and transportation at the GLC in 1965.

Ridley later attended the senior executive programme at Stanford Business School, and became a director of Halcrow Fox and Associates, consulting engineers, after leaving London Transport.

In 1991 he became Rees Jeffreys professor of transport engineering at Imperial College London, and from 1997 to 1999 he headed Imperial's department of civil and environmental engineering. Between 1995 and 1996 he was president of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

Ridley was devoted to the theatre, classical music and the Devonshire countryside. In 1959 he married Jane Dickinson who survives him with their two sons and a daughter.

Having made his name as a pioneer of integrated transport, it was fitting that Ridley's last contribution was as senior transport adviser to the London 2012 Olympic bid.

Tony Ridley CBE, civil engineer, was born on November 10, 1933. He died in March 2026, aged 92

Register

David Norman

Dogged headhunter who bagged Ian MacGregor for British Steel and became chairman of the Royal Ballet School and Queen's

David Norman charmed his way into the highest echelons of British industry with the ease of a man eating his breakfast. He was a consummate persuader: as a headhunter he bagged Ian MacGregor for British Steel at a time when the soon-to-be-privatised company was losing more than £500 million a year, and as chairman of Queen's and the Royal Ballet School he dug out funds and rallied political support with the dogged persistence of a terrier.

Norman was not to everybody's taste. Some people found him bullying and hectoring, and his indefatigable ambition — his ruthless desire to win at all costs — repelled many members of the British establishment. "A man of great charm, very well disguised, and mind-boggling arrogance, less well disguised," noted one contemporary; others saw Norman simply as a man fond of self-promotion.

"One of the things that always most distresses me is the British inclination to denigrate success," he said. "We're very good at it. It's fashionable to be satirical about success, and also to be forever admiring of the gifted amateur, who doesn't appear to have to apply his talent too strongly to be successful. I admire more the American attitude, which is just to encourage talent for all it's worth. Stretch it to the limit, and apply it to the task at hand, and you'll then succeed."

Norman fell into headhunting by accident. After working for a succession of start-ups, he was poached in 1977 to direct the New York executive-search firm Russell Reynolds, where he used his web of connections — captain of house at Eton, a Harvard MBA, a father high up in the City — to secure top-tier positions including suggesting that Maurice Saatchi run the campaign for the Conservative Party during the 1979 election. When it won, Saatchi sent 12 dozen roses to the family home in London as a thank you.

MacGregor was a Scottish engineer working in America when Norman put him forward to run the British Steel Corporation in 1980. He would "fundamentally change the way that nationalised industry was run in this country", said Norman, who worked closely with Margaret Thatcher's government to secure the position, but MacGregor's ruthless job cuts and plant closures would also prove controversial.

In 1983 he paired up with Miles Broadbent, a colleague at Russell Reynolds, to start Norman Broadbent International (NBI), Britain's first executive search firm, which built a reputation for scouting talented heads of industry after the deregulation of the City under Thatcher in 1986. Its breakthrough appointment was the relatively unknown Colin Marshall, who as chief executive of British Airways would form a winning double act with Lord King of Wartnaby, known as "Mrs Thatcher's favourite businessman".

NBI became one of Britain's most successful headhunting firms in a traditionally American sector, and at a time when seeking high-end external appointments was still relatively rare. Britain never lacked in talent, Norman said, but needed someone with guts to draw it out: "It's all about achieving a competitiveness in the global economy of the world. Do we have the brains, the applications to do it? Yes we do. We've certainly got the brains. I think one of the biggest challenges in this country is then to apply those brains to the task at hand."

In 1987 Norman Broadbent engineered a reverse takeover of the advertising and PR firm Charles Barker, and Norman was appointed executive chairman of BNB Resources, as it was renamed, while Broadbent continued

Norman had a wide network from his time at Eton, Harvard and in the City

to run the search business. The partners fell out, reportedly because Norman sought more hands-on control. Broadbent left in 1997 to start the Miles Partnership, taking key clients with him, and Norman retired a year later amid calls from the board to resign.

Norman Broadbent had made Norman enormously wealthy and secured him a network of patronage that made him an attractive board member for a range of organisations in New York and Britain. As chairman of the Tennis & Rackets Association (T&RA) from 1982 to 1997 and of Queen's in 2010-11, Norman funded an ambitious plan to expand membership, restore courts at the club and create a museum. He played a key role in renegotiating the Queen's Club's lease with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and in safeguarding the future of rackets, securing protective covenants that protected the courts from being sold to developers (the Queen's championship rackets court is named in his honour).

A gifted tennis player, he also took it upon himself to tell Andy Murray, when presenting him with an award, that he should learn to "control his temper" if he wanted to make it at Wimbledon. Norman was comfortable with confrontation. When David Cameron was in office, he wrote the prime minister a frank letter detailing Cameron's various policy errors and enclosed three pieces of advice to follow. Cameron wrote a polite letter back, which Norman circulated among his family with the proviso that they should expect some key changes.

Those particular amendments were slow to appear but Norman did exercise political influence as chairman of the Royal Ballet School from 2000 to 2009. During his tenure there was a decade of redevelopment known as the "reawakening of White Lodge", culminating in £22 million of investment that was secured, in part, from David Miliband, then a junior schools minister who Norman persuaded to approve a round of government funding into British ballet. Norman bolstered the school's outreach programme to children from diverse backgrounds and oversaw the construction of the "Bridge of Aspiration" which connected students from the Royal Ballet School to the opera house across the road.

David Mark Norman was born in 1941. His father, Mark, was managing director of the merchant bank Lazard Brothers, vice-chairman of the National Trust and chairman of Gallaher, a cigarette manufacturer; his mother Helen (née Bryan) was from Virginia. He grew up at Moor Place in the village of Much Hadham, Hertfordshire, a grade I listed house built between 1775 and 1779 by the architect Robert Mitchell. His grandfather Ronald Norman was a politician, banker and chairman of the BBC; his great-uncle, Montagu Norman, was governor of the Bank of England from 1920 to 1944.

A "keen and forceful character" at Eton, as one schoolmaster put it, David was a fiercely competitive sportsman who graduated from McGill University in Montreal and earned a business MBA from Harvard in 1967. Living in America in the Sixties was his only concession to an easygoing life: he worked as a travelling salesman and behind the checkout at a supermarket in San Francisco, driving coast to coast in a beaten-up VW Beetle.

In 1966 he married Diana Sheffield, the daughter of one of Britain's leading financiers, John Sheffield, who founded the Norcros conglomerate and backed the Sixties pirate station Radio Caroline. Sheffield brought his son-in-law into the fold and propelled him through an apprenticeship at a private equity firm. From there his rise was swift and cold-blooded. Norman's final appointment was as a trustee for Kew Gardens.

Those closest to Norman often diagnosed, beneath the hard exterior, a softness that materialised at the ballet. If you caught his eye during a performance he might have tears running down his face. He was fond of playing the piano, though never in front of other people, and he hated goodbyes.

Norman is survived by four children: Anna, Jonathan, Isabella and Davina. He was devoted to his wife, Diana, and in his final years took care of her as she deteriorated from multiple sclerosis; she died in 2020. He kept her toothbrush in a mug by the basin until it was his turn to depart.

David Norman, executive headhunter, was born on January 30, 1941. He died on July 12, 2026, aged 85

Kay Granger

Path-breaking US Congresswoman who was the first Republican woman to lead the powerful House appropriations committee

One of the more remarkable features of Kay Granger's long political career was the manner of her departure from the US House of Representatives. In essence, nobody noticed.

Some time in the summer of 2024 the octogenarian Republican was quietly admitted to an assisted-living facility in Texas, her home state. From that July onwards she cast no votes in the House. She briefly returned to Capitol Hill for the unveiling of her official portrait that November, but it was not until the following month that a local website broke the news that she was suffering from dementia and no longer politically active. As one commentator remarked, "it was a confounding miss" because "Granger wasn't a nobody". On the contrary, for most of her three decades in politics she had been a trailblazer.

She had surmounted personal adversities to become the first woman mayor of Fort Worth, the first Republican woman to represent a Texas district in the US House, the first Republican woman to chair the powerful House appropriations committee, and one of the most powerful Republicans in Congress.

None of that came easily. As she used to tell other women, "success comes to ordinary people who set a direction and work like crazy".

Norvell Kay Granger (née Mullendore) was born in Greenville, Texas, in 1943, and raised in Fort Worth. Her parents divorced not long after, and she and her sister were raised by her mother, Alliene, a teacher who continued to work even after she was crippled by polio. "The women in my family are strong women," said Granger.

MICHAEL KOVAC/GETTY IMAGES

Granger in 2012 with Sir Elton John at an event for the singer's Aids Foundation

Granger became a teacher herself after graduating from Texas Wesleyan University in 1965. She had a daughter and two sons with her husband, John Granger, before he left her after 14 years of marriage in 1978.

To make ends meet she started selling commercial insurance from home while studying in the evenings, and eventually opened her own business. "You just fight your way through the day," she said of the challenge of earning a living while raising three young children.

Her political activism began after she rallied her neighbours to block a company's plans to build a liquid waste disposal plant on wooded land adjoining their homes. She was "protecting the only asset I had — my house", she said.

That victory won her a place on the Fort Worth zoning board. Eight years later she was elected to the city council, and two years after that, in 1991, became the city's first woman mayor. On the day she was sworn in she met Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh at a reception in neighbouring Dallas.

She served nearly five years as a non-partisan mayor, reversing soaring crime rates, rebuilding a defence-orientated economy hit by the end of the Cold War, and earning herself a reputation as a pragmatist who got things done.

When the local US congressman — a Democrat — announced his retirement in 1996, both Democrats and Republicans sought to persuade her to contest the seat on their behalf. Although the 12th congressional district of Texas was regarded as a Democratic stronghold, she chose the Republicans because she considered them more fiscally responsible. She duly became the first Republican to win the seat, securing nearly 58 per cent of the vote, and held it for the next 28 years.

In Washington Granger was seen as a hawk on defence and national security issues. She backed the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, calling that conflict the "battlefield" of the global war on terror. She robustly supported Ukraine following Russia's invasion in 2022 and used her membership of the appropriations committee to steer lucrative contracts to the big defence manufacturers in her district — notably contracts for hugely expensive F-35 warplanes built by Lockheed Martin.

On social issues, however, Granger was considered more centrist, and as time passed she found herself increasingly at odds with a Republican Party that had moved sharply to the right on cultural matters.

She survived through compromise. Once a supporter of abortion rights, she was by 2020 urging the Supreme Court to overturn its 1973 Roe v Wade decision and restrict those rights.

She opposed Donald Trump's 2016 presidential bid, calling his comments about women "disgusting" and saying he "definitely should not be considered to speak for our nation as president". But four years later, when she was facing a tough and unprecedented Maga-backed primary challenge in her Texas district, she endorsed his campaign for re-election and was duly endorsed by him in return.

She won that contest, but she could not defeat her advancing age. In October 2023, aged 80, she announced she would not stand again in the next congressional elections. In April 2024 she relinquished her brief chairmanship of the appropriations committee. Not long after that she vanished from public sight for many months until she was eventually discovered in an assisted-living facility that December. Her son then revealed that she had "dementia issues".

Granger's condition fuelled a debate about a congressional system that rewards seniority over merit, energy and ideas, and whether there should be term limits. Three other congressional leaders — Nancy Pelosi, Dianne Feinstein and Mitch McConnell — had recently clung to office despite reaching their eighties, and there was growing alarm about President Biden's mental decline. But nothing changed.

Kay Granger, US congresswoman, was born on January 18, 1943. She died of Alzheimer's disease on August 2, 2026, aged 83

Law Report

Frightening the falcons was negligent but not a nuisance

Court of Appeal
Published August 11, 2026

Nicholas and others v Thomas and another

Before Lord Justice Moylan, Lord Justice Nugee and Lady Justice Whipple
[2026] EWCA Civ 847
Judgment July 3, 2026

Actionable nuisance depended on the substantial interference with a person's ordinary use of their land. A claimant whose use of the land was more than usually sensitive could not complain of an interference with his enjoyment of that land as an actionable nuisance unless the interference would substantially affect the utility or amenity value of the land judged both by an objective test, that is according to plain and simple notions of the ordinary or average person, and by the ordinary use of the land.

However, in a case where the claimants used the land to breed falcons, and it was foreseeable that excessive noise or visual threats on the defendants' land might cause harm to the falcons, the defendants owed a duty to take reasonable care to avoid such damage. The defendants were not entitled to act with complete disregard for the interests of their neighbours and could therefore be liable in negligence, even if not in nuisance.

The Court of Appeal so held, by a majority in each case, when (per Lord Justice Moylan and Lord Justice Nugee) allowing the defendants' appeal as to nuisance, and (per Lord Justice Nugee and Lady Justice Whipple) dismissing the defendants' appeal as to negligence, from the decision of Judge Russen KC sitting as a High Court judge in the Chancery Division on April 8, 2025 ([2025] EWHC 752 (Ch)), allowing claims as to nuisance and negligence.

The first and second claimants, Martin Craig Nicholas and Scott Nicholas, were directors of the third claimant company, Raptors of Penwith Ltd, which ran a business breeding falcons in an aviary close to the boundary of the first and second claimants' land with land owned by the second defendant company, Upper Cot Estate Ltd, and under the day-to-day control of the first defendant, Barnes Davison Thomas.

The third claimant brought claims in private nuisance and negligence against the defendants, seeking damages for losses caused to its business.

The judge found that: (i) the first defendant was aware of the risk to the third claimant's business of creating a visual disturbance or making loud noise close to the aviary when the falcons were breeding; (ii) the first defendant, through the second defendant, conducted activities close to the aviary which created individual instances of visual disturbance or loud noise; and (iii) those individual instances caused the death of three of the third claimants' falcons and damage to eggs.

The individual instances complained of occurred in the course of three activities conducted or permitted by the defendants: (i) a scaffolding business; (ii) building a barn; and (iii) parking a broken-down digger.

The judge allowed the claims, holding that individual instances of visual disturbance and loud noise amounted to a nuisance and were also negligent.

The defendants appealed as to both claims. In the nuisance claim the grounds were that the judge erred: (i) in wrongly increasing the defendants' liabilities by reference to the third claimant's falcon business as a sensitive trade; (ii) in wrongly measuring the defendants' interference with the claimants' use of their land by reference to that sensitive trade rather than by reference to what might be common and ordinary use; and (iii) in impermissibly and unjustifiably restraining the defendants' use of the second defendant's land.

In the negligence claim the defendants' grounds were that no action in negligence lay once the claim in nuisance had failed, and in any event the defendants owed no duty of care to the claimants.

Tom Weekes KC and **Camilla Lamont** for the defendants; **Mr Jonathan Seitler KC**, **David Mitchell** and **Lemuel Lucan-Wilson** for the claimants.

LADY JUSTICE WHIPPLE gave the first judgment, setting out the facts and legal arguments before substantially agreeing with and approving the judge's approach.

However, Lord Justice Nugee, with whom Lord Justice Moylan concurred, differed from her Ladyship on the question of nuisance, and gave reasons for allowing the defendant's appeal on that issue.

The test of what constituted private nuisance in law had been explained by Lord Leggatt in the leading case of *Fearn v Board of Trustees of the Tate Gallery* ([2023] UKSC 1; The Times, February 6, 2023).

The law of private nuisance was concerned with maintaining a balance between the conflicting rights of neighbouring landowners. Not every interference with a person's use and enjoyment of their land could be actionable as a nuisance.

The first question which the court had to ask was whether the defendant's use of land had caused a "substantial" interference with the "ordinary" use of the claimant's land.

A claimant who was more than usually sensitive could not complain of an interference with his enjoyment of land as an actionable nuisance unless that interference would substantially affect the utility or amenity value of the land judged both by an objective test, viz according to plain and simple notions of the ordinary or average person, and by the ordinary use of the land.

The fact that a trade was being carried on in a suitable location did entitle that trade to be regarded as an "ordinary" trade for the purposes of the law of nuisance, even if it was a particularly sensitive one.

Nuisance was a tort against land and was limited by the requirement that a defendant's activities substantially interfere with the ordinary use of land.

The tort was directed at protecting the interests which an owner or occupier of land had in not having the ordinary utility and amenity of their land substantially interfered with, and not the bodily security or comfort of the particular individuals occupying it, nor the interests of the particular business which the claimant used the land for.

Whether the defendant had committed an actionable nuisance was not determined by what the claimant did with their land, but by the impact on the ordinary or average occupier of the land.

A person carrying on a delicate trade could potentially recover in nuisance if the interference they complained of was such as would substantially affect the utility of the land for ordinary purposes.

In the present case, the judge's finding that the claimant's land was a suitable place for the breeding of falcons did not mean that that became an ordinary use of the land for those purposes.

Moreover, the acts on which the judge had relied in finding there to be a nuisance did not in fact cross the applicable threshold. For these reasons (supported by the majority) the appeal on the issue of nuisance should be allowed and the judge's decision reversed.

On the question of negligence, however, while Lord Justice Moylan dissented, Lord Justice Nugee concurred with Lady Justice Whipple that the appeal should be dismissed.

The question was whether the judge had been right to hold that the defendants owed the claimants "a duty of care not to create disturbances that would harm the falcons during their breeding season".

The decided cases had long recognised a duty of care owed by the occupier of land to his neighbour, so that the owner or occupier of land might owe a duty to the owner or occupier of neighbouring land to take reasonable care to avoid foreseeable damage to his neighbour's property.

In the present case, where it was foreseeable that excessive noise or visual threats might cause such harm to the falcons, the defendants had owed a duty to take reasonable care to avoid such damage. The defendants were not entitled to act with complete disregard for the interests of their neighbours in the way they had done.

Accordingly, the judge was right to hold that the defendants owed the third claimant a duty of care not to create disturbances that would harm the falcons during their breeding season, and the appeal on the issue of negligence should be dismissed.

Solicitors: **Nalders LLP; Arch Law Ltd.**

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THE TIMES

Births, Marriages and Deaths

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THESE are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. Genesis 2.4-5 (AV)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Births

CAMPKIN on 29th July 2026 to Kate Gearing and Jonathan, a daughter, Isabella Mary Julie.

Forthcoming Marriages

MR C. L. A. DOUGLAS AND THE HON I. ERSKINE-MURRAY
The engagement is announced between Charles, elder son of Mr David Douglas of London and Mrs Christine Feutry Douglas of Paris, and Isabella, elder daughter of Lord and Lady Elibank of Rockbourne, Hampshire.

Deaths

CLARK Nicholas Jackson died on 30th July 2026. Beloved father of Matthew and Jono, father-in-law of Jo and Huggy, devoted grandfather of Lottie, Ben, James and Millie. Private funeral. Memorial service to be arranged.

DRUMMOND Mary-Jane died peacefully on 20th July 2026, aged 83. Greatly missed by family, friends and colleagues. The funeral will take place at 11am on 20th August at Barton Woodland Burial Ground, Comberton Road, Barton, CB23 7BA. All welcome. Donations if desired to Amnesty or Shelter.

DUNCAN SANDYS Lady Marie Claire died on 31st July 2026. Dearly loved by all her family and friends. Private family cremation. Memorial service to follow later in the year.

EVANS Rt Hon Sir Anthony Howell Meurig PC RD died peacefully on 2nd August 2026, aged 92. Beloved husband of Caroline, devoted father, grandfather and great-grandfather. A true gentleman. Admired and respected, generous and kind. A friend to all. Family funeral. A memorial service to be held at a later date. Details to follow.

FUSSELL Micheline (Michele) Gisele (née Desmaret) died peacefully on 13th July 2026, aged 80. Loving mother of Christopher and Joanna and proud grandmother to Keira, Isabella, Oscar, William and Hannah. Funeral service to be held on 15th August at St John the Evangelist, Boxmoor, Hertfordshire, at noon. Family flowers only please. Donations to Macmillan Cancer Support.

HARDY Justin St Clair died suddenly at home on 31st July, aged 61. Beloved husband to Larissa and much-loved father to Sam, Ludo, Nico and Summer. Private family funeral. A memorial service to celebrate his life will follow.

MAXWELL Diane (née Hartley) died peacefully on 29th July 2026, aged 89. Formerly Hanbury-Williams. Beloved wife of the late Timothy Maxwell and previously of the late Anthony Hanbury-Williams. Much-loved mother of Nicholas, Charles, Michael and Victoria and beloved grandmother and great-grandmother. Service of thanksgiving to be held at Chelsea Old Church, 64 Cheyne Walk, London SW3 5LT on 26th August at 2.30pm.

Memorial Services

CAYZER Nigel. At Chelsea Old Church on 24th September 2026 at 11am. All are welcome to attend.

Court Circular

St James's Palace
10th August, 2026
The Duchess of Edinburgh, Royal Patron, today visited the Armed Forces Para-Snowsport Team at the Snow Centre, St Albans Hill, Hemel Hempstead, and was received by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire (Mr Robert Voss).

Weather

Today Mainly dry and warm or hot with plenty of sunshine, especially in England. Max 30C (86F), min 11C (52F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder ☆=previous day ☆☆=data not available

	Temp C midday yesterday		Rain mm 24 hrs to 5pm yesterday	Sun hr☆
Aberdeen	16	PC	0.0	2.9
Aberporth	17	S	0.0	11.7
Anglesey	18	PC	0.6	1.8
Aviemore	15	C	0.0	2.8
Barnstaple	21	S	0.0	☆☆
Bedford	22	S	0.0	☆☆
Belfast	17	C	0.2	1.0
Birmingham	21	S	0.0	☆☆
Bournemouth	25	PC	0.0	12.7
Bridlington	18	S	0.8	☆☆
Bristol	23	S	0.0	12.9
Camborne	21	S	0.0	12.8
Cardiff	20	S	0.4	12.6
Edinburgh	19	PC	0.2	2.8
Eskdalemuir	17	C	0.8	2.1
Glasgow	18	S	0.0	3.5
Hereford	21	S	0.0	☆☆
Herstmonceux	27	PC	0.0	10.8
Ipswich	21	C	0.0	9.1
Isle of Man	17	PC	2.8	0.0
Isle of Wight	27	S	0.0	☆☆
Jersey	22	S	0.0	11.7
Keswick	18	PC	4.2	☆☆
Kinloss	☆☆	☆☆	0.0	5.0
Leeds	18	S	0.6	☆☆
Lerwick	12	C	2.2	5.8
Leuchars	19	PC	0.0	3.0
Lincoln	20	S	0.0	9.9
Liverpool	19	S	1.0	☆☆
London	25	S	0.0	10.1
Lyneham	21	S	0.0	11.6
Manchester	21	S	0.4	5.4
Margate	24	S	0.0	12.2
Milford Haven	22	S	0.0	☆☆
Newcastle	18	C	0.8	☆☆
Nottingham	22	S	0.0	10.2
Orkney	14	C	0.0	☆☆
Oxford	23	S	0.0	☆☆
Plymouth	26	S	0.0	☆☆
Portland	22	PC	0.0	☆☆
Scilly, St Mary's	20	C	0.0	☆☆
Shoreham	25	S	0.0	10.9
Shrewsbury	20	S	0.0	8.7
Snowdonia	18	PC	0.4	☆☆
Southend	25	PC	0.0	8.8
South Uist	15	PC	0.0	☆☆
Stornoway	14	C	0.8	5.6
Tiree	15	C	0.0	6.4
Whitehaven	17	PC	1.8	0.3
Wick	☆☆	R	0.8	☆☆
Yeovilton	24	S	0.0	12.3

The world

All readings local midday yesterday

Alicante	33	PC	Madeira	26	PC
Amsterdam	21	PC	Madrid	33	S
Athens	31	PC	Malaga	31	S
Auckland	☆☆	☆☆	Mallorca	39	S
Bahrain	40	S	Malta	34	PC
Bangkok	32	PC	Melbourne	10	SH
Barbados	31	PC	Mexico City	23	B
Barcelona	33	PC	Miami	33	B
Beijing	☆☆	☆☆	Milan	32	S
Beirut	☆☆	☆☆	Mombasa	29	B
Belgrade	33	S	Montreal	26	B
Berlin	30	S	Moscow	23	S
Bermuda	30	PC	Mumbai	30	☆☆
Bordeaux	31	S	Munich	32	S
Brussels	26	S	Nairobi	22	PC
Bucharest	27	S	Naples	33	S
Budapest	33	S	New Orleans	32	PC
Buenos Aires	☆☆	☆☆	New York	32	B
Cairo	36	S	Nice	31	S
Calcutta	32	☆☆	Nicosia	35	S
Canberra	5	R	Oslo	18	S
Cape Town	14	PC	Paris	29	S
Chicago	26	T	Perth	13	T
Copenhagen	17	B	Prague	32	S
Corfu	36	PC	Reykjavik	14	PC
Delhi	33	☆☆	Riga	25	S
Dubai	44	PC	Rio de Janeiro	29	PC
Dublin	18	PC	Riyadh	44	S
Faro	25	S	Rome	33	S
Florence	36	S	San Francisco	21	PC
Frankfurt	33	S	Santiago	10	PC
Geneva	33	S	São Paulo	23	S
Gibraltar	29	S	Seoul	32	S
Helsinki	23	PC	Seychelles	29	PC
Hong Kong	35	PC	Singapore	32	B
Honolulu	☆☆	☆☆	St Petersburg	24	B
Istanbul	30	PC	Stockholm	17	B
Jerusalem	34	S	Sydney	16	PC
Johannesburg	15	S	Tel Aviv	34	S
Kuala Lumpur	33	PC	Tenerife	28	PC
Kyiv	☆☆	☆☆	Tokyo	30	PC
Lanzarote	29	PC	Vancouver	20	B
Las Palmas	27	PC	Venice	☆☆	☆☆
Lima	22	DU	Vienna	33	S
Lisbon	28	PC	Warsaw	29	S
Los Angeles	26	PC	Washington	32	B
Luxor	39	S	Zurich	☆☆	☆☆

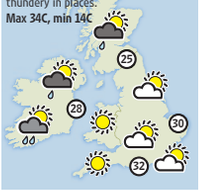
Five days ahead

Staying mainly dry and warm or hot with sunny spells over England and Wales

Tomorrow

Hot, dry and sunny over England and Wales. Warm with sunny spells and the risk of a few showers in Scotland and Ireland, perhaps heavy and thundery in places.

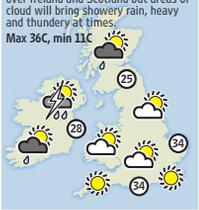
Max 34C, min 14C



Thursday

Dry, sunny and very hot in England and Wales. Some hot spells of sunshine over Ireland and Scotland but areas of cloud will bring showery rain, heavy and thundery at times.

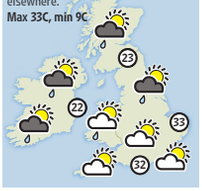
Max 36C, min 11C



Friday

Feeling fresher over Ireland, Scotland, Wales and northwestern England with sunny spells and the risk of a few showers. Hot, dry and mostly sunny elsewhere.

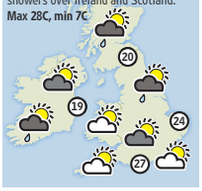
Max 33C, min 9C



Saturday

Dry and warm with sunny spells over most of England and Wales, but the risk of a few light showers in northwestern areas. Scattered showers over Ireland and Scotland.

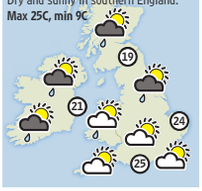
Max 28C, min 7C



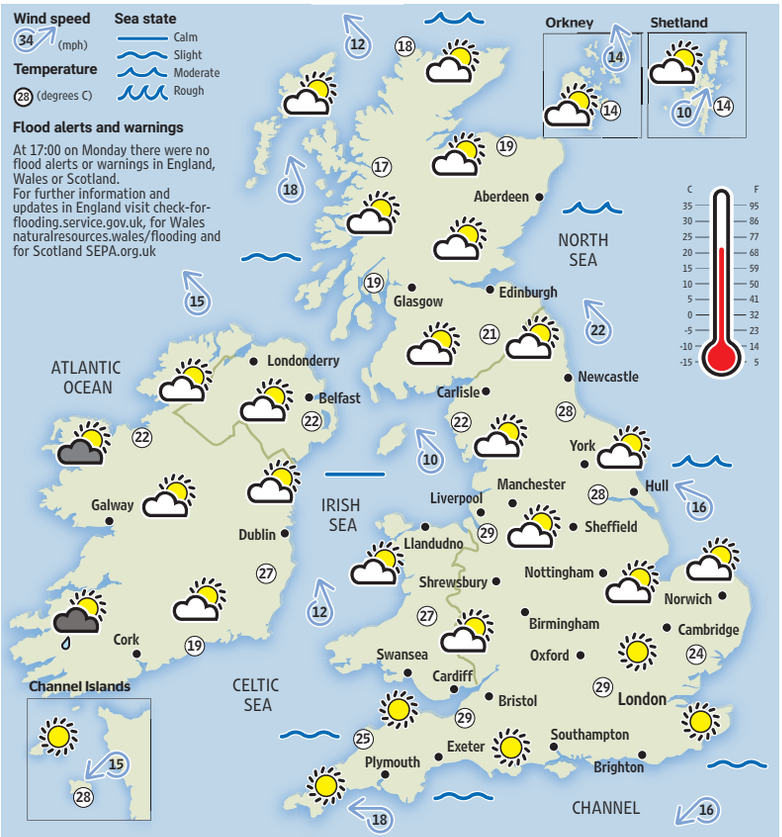
Sunday

Some sunny intervals but cloud tending to increase to bring showery rain over Ireland and Scotland, then into Wales and northern England later. Dry and sunny in southern England.

Max 25C, min 9C



The Times weather page is provided by WeatherQuest



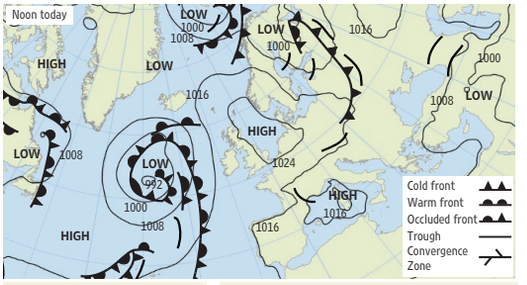
General situation: Some thicker cloud and showery rain in northern Scotland and western Ireland, otherwise it will be dry, sunny and warm or hot over Britain and Ireland.
E Anglia, Cen S Eng, SE Eng, London, Midlands, SW Eng, Channel Is, Wales, NW Eng, Cen N Eng, E Eng: A dry and warm or hot day with long spells of sunshine. Light to moderate south or southeasterly winds, perhaps fresh near the coast. Maximum 30C (86F), minimum 12C (54F).

Republic of Ireland: Dry with warm spells of sunshine in eastern areas but cloudier further west with the risk of a few showers. Light to moderate south or southeasterly winds. Maximum 27C (81F), minimum 13C (55F).
NE Eng, Lake District, N Ireland, IoM, SW Scotland, Borders: A dry day with sunny spells and areas of patchy cloud. Light south or southeasterly winds. Maximum 28C (82F), minimum 13C (55F).
N Isles: Mainly dry with sunny spells but the risk of an isolated light shower at times. Light to moderate south or southeasterly winds. Maximum 15C (59F), minimum 11C (52F).
Edinburgh and Dundee, Cen Highland, Glasgow, NW Scotland, Moray Firth, Argyll, Aberdeen, NE Scotland: Rather cloudy with spots of rain in the morning, turning dry with sunny spells during the afternoon. Light south or southeasterly winds, perhaps fresh near the coast. Maximum 22C (72F), minimum 11C (52F).

Tides

Tidal predictions.
Heights in metres. All times in local time

Today	Ht		Ht	
Aberdeen	--:--	--	13:17	4.1
Avonmouth	06:46	11.7	19:10	12.4
Belfast	10:48	3.2	23:00	3.5
Cardiff	06:36	10.9	19:00	11.5
Devonport	05:18	4.9	17:37	5.3
Dover	10:54	6.2	23:25	6.3
Dublin	11:22	2.9	23:31	3.2
Falmouth	04:47	4.6	17:07	5.0
Greenock	--:--	--	12:22	3.1
Harwich	11:16	3.7	23:45	3.9
Holyhead	10:05	5.2	22:21	5.5
Hull	05:37	6.8	18:18	7.1
Leith	01:51	5.1	14:25	5.3
Liverpool	10:49	8.7	23:10	9.1
London Bridge	--:--	--	13:35	6.4
Lowestoft	08:44	2.4	21:40	2.5
Milford Haven	05:47	6.3	18:11	6.8
Morecambe	11:00	8.7	23:21	9.2
Newhaven	10:48	6.2	23:08	6.4
Newquay	04:40	6.2	17:04	6.6
Oban	05:55	3.5	18:01	3.8
Penzance	04:12	4.9	16:37	5.3
Portsmouth	11:08	4.4	23:18	4.5
Shoreham	11:02	5.8	23:21	6.0
Southampton	10:10	4.2	22:27	4.3
Swansea	05:52	8.5	18:16	8.9
Tees	02:58	5.1	15:35	5.3
Weymouth	06:20	1.7	18:34	2.0



Synoptic situation

An area of high pressure centred in the North Sea will bring a dry, mainly sunny and warm day across most of the British Isles. A warm and occluded front in the Atlantic will push some thicker cloud and spots of light rain into northwestern Scotland and western Ireland at times. Turning hot over England and Wales in the next few days.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday

Warmest: Thorney Island, West Sussex, 28.4C
Coldest: Cairngorm, 1.8C
Wettest: Killowen, Co Down, 7.0mm
Sunniest: Exeter, 13.1hrs☆

Sun and moon

For Greenwich
Sun rises: 05.39
Sun sets: 20.30
Moon rises: 03.23
Moon sets: 20.09
New moon: August 12

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	21:30-04:59
Belfast	21:35-05:24
Birmingham	21:11-05:15
Cardiff	21:13-05:23
Exeter	21:12-05:27
Glasgow	21:33-05:13
Liverpool	21:19-05:16
London	21:01-05:11
Manchester	21:16-05:13
Newcastle	21:19-05:05
Norwich	20:59-05:02
Penzance	21:18-05:37
Sheffield	21:12-05:10

Weather Eye

Paul Simons

If there was a word to sum up this summer's weather it might be "swullocking", a fine 19th-century East Anglian term for sultry, oppressive heat when the air is so stifling you can barely breathe. It is probable that "swullocking" came from the 16th-century words "sweltry" and "swoly", which eventually evolved into "sweltering".

There is no doubt about the meaning of "fire-fanged", a great description of the scorching heat that can set heaps of manure or compost bursting into flames in a highly dangerous phenomenon known as spontaneous combustion. "Fire-fanged" can also be used to describe crops dried out and wilting under intense sunshine. Also beware the Scottish verb "birsle", to toast or roast something, which very often refers to food. But on a hot day at the beach without sunblock, it could be you who ends up birsled.

If the heat and humidity leave you dripping with sweat then you can also turn to the 13th-century words "besweat" or "forswat". And in nights this summer when temperatures were 20C or more, people could have complained that they had been left "forwallowed", meaning exhausted from tossing and turning all night.

Possibly the best known of the old phrases for hot summer weather is "the dog days of summer". This is not about dogs panting in the heat, but was named after the Dog Star, Sirius, in the constellation Canis Major. This is the time of year when Sirius is the brightest star in the sky, as Thomas Hardy described in *Far From The Madding Crowd*: "The kingly brilliance of Sirius pierced the eye with a steely glitter." Because Sirius rises alongside the sun in mid-summer, it was believed that the star and the sun together created hot weather with barely a breeze. But while both ancient Greece and ancient Rome feared the dog days of summer, in ancient Egypt the return of Sirius was greeted with great anticipation because it signalled the time when the Nile flooded and irrigated parched fields.

Speak directly to one of our forecasters on 09065 777675

8am to 5pm daily (calls are charged at £1.55 plus network extras)

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TIMES Holidays

Sport

Hamilton

Thunderer

5.30 Hurt You Never
6.00 Baldetti
6.30 Sheikhnshah
7.00 Return To Unit (nb)
7.30 Second Fiddle
8.00 Station X
8.30 Fairydale

Going: good to soft-good in places
Draw: 6f-1m1f, low numbers best Racing TV

5.30 Handicap
(£3,664: 5f) (8)

1 (1) 50005 **TANJEN** 17 (D) T Easterby 4-9-9 **J Dickson**
2 (8) 05502 **HURT YOU NEVER** 8 (B,CD) Adrian Nicholls 7-9-9 **M Slater**
3 (5) 35014 **COTAI STARLIGHT** 15 K Scott 3-9-6 **J Bradnam**
4 (7) 00000 **HVAR** 36 (W) J & S Quinn 3-9-6 **A Redman**
5 (3) 0-660 **NEVER DARK** 10 (CD) I Jardine 9-9-5 **J Fernandes**
6 (4) 20304 **UKIYO** 3 A Kinirons (Ire) 5-9-2 **Y Geerdharry**
7 (6) 5-342 **SOUTH SHORE ISLAND** 13 (P) Lizzie Quinlan 4-8-12 **Molly Keegan-Price (5)**
8 (2) 00266 **SUMMERSTORMS DREAM** 3 (P) J Goldie 4-8-9 **F Bassett (7)**

11-4 Hurt You Never, 4-1 Cotai Starlight, 9-2 South Shore Island, 5-1 Tanjen, 7-1 Ukiyo, 10-1 Summerstorms Dream, Never Dark, 20-1 Hvar.

Thunderer's choice: Hurt You Never is 15lb lower in the ratings than when winning at this track a year ago **Dangers:** Ukiyo, Never Dark

6.00 Novice Stakes
(2-Y-O: £6,210: 6f) (6)

1 (5) 32 **BALDETTI** 25 M Dods 9-7 **S B Kirrane**
2 (3) 5232 **HARLEY** 15 (BF) E Bethell 9-7 **D Tudhope**
3 (4) 04 **LONGSHANKS LUKE** 6 (B) P Neville 9-7 **B McHugh**
4 (1) 6264 **SEA MIRAGE** 25 K Ryan 9-7 **Shane Gray**
5 (6) 0 **LIGHTENINGS LEGACY** 43 (V) M Usher 9-4 **J Fernandes (7)**
6 (2) 56 **PROFITABILITY** 32 Craig Lidster 8-13 **W Pyle**

13-8 Baldetti, 7-4 Harley, 4-1 Sea Mirage, 10-1 Profitability, 16-1 Longshanks Luke, 33-1 Lightenings Legacy.

Thunderer's choice: Baldetti was touched off at Pontefract last time and can go one better **Danger:** Harley

6.30 Maiden Stakes
(£6,210: 1m) (8)

1 (1) 43 **AL FUJAIRAH** 26 I Jardine 3-9-7 **A Mullen**
2 (4) **EAGLES INSTINCT** J Goldie 3-9-7 **P Mulrennan**
3 (5) 40 **FREDDY FEARLESS** 35 D & N Barron 3-9-7 **W Pyle**
4 (7) 6 **LEAGUE OF JUSTICE** 19 G Tutty 3-9-7 **J Dickson (5)**
5 (8) 23 **MATTER OF BRITAIN** 12 D O'Meara 3-9-7 **D Tudhope**
6 (2) 3-33 **SHEIKHNSHAH** 54 J Camacho 3-9-7 **R Sexton**
7 (3) 46 **UPPER EAST** 59 K Scott 3-9-7 **S D Bowen**
8 (6) 5 **MIDNIGHT SERENADE** 10 R M Smith 3-9-2 **S B Kirrane**

5-2 Sheikhnshah, 3-1 Upper East, 7-2 Matter Of Britain, 6-1 League Of Justice, 7-1 Freddy Fearless, 12-1 Eagles Instinct, 20-1 Al Fujairah, 100-1 Midnight Serenade.

Thunderer's choice: Sheikhnshah has been gelded since his latest run and holds solid form claims **Dangers**: Upper East, Matter Of Britain

7.00 Handicap
(£13,400: 1m 1f) (14)

1 (14) -2233 **EL MATADOR** 47 R Beckett 4-10-2 **R Clutterbuck**
2 (7) 21-01 **RETURN TO UNIT** 61 (B) R Varian 4-10-1 **S D Bowen**
3 (5) 6-610 **POINT OF CONTACT** 38 (BF,D) A Balding 4-10-1 **P J McDonald**
4 (4) 30310 **ALTAREQ** 31 J Goldie 4-10-0 **Lauren Young (5)**
5 (13) 4-002 **IMPARTIALITY** 59 (P,C) Phillip Makin 4-9-12 **D Costello**
6 (3) 23264 **SPOKEN TRUTH** 17 D O'Meara 5-9-12 **D Tudhope**
7 (2) 05013 **CADARN** 24 (T) K Ryan 5-9-12 **Shane Gray**
8 (6) 03031 **DOUBLE PARKED** 45 (T) T Easterby 4-9-11 **D Allan**
9 (1) 03-04 **GALYX** 60 J Channon 5-9-9 **N Currie**
10 (12) 04221 **DWINDLING FUNDS** 17 (P,CD) J Goldie 5-9-6 **P Mulrennan**
11 (8) 4-222 **SWIFT SALIAN** 61 (C,D) D & N Barron 5-9-4 **W Pyle**
12 (10) 00340 **STRENGTH OF SPIRIT** 12 K R Burke 3-9-4 **J Nicholls (3)**
13 (11) 4-506 **BRIGID'S WELL** 37 (T) H Palmer 3-9-3 **A Mullen**
14 (9) 02503 **BLUE TO BLUE** 23 Ruth Jefferson 3-8-13 **B Garritty**

10-3 Return To Unit, 11-2 El Matador, 7-1 Dwindling Funds, 8-1 Double Parked, 10-1 Spoken Truth, Cadarn, 12-1 Point Of Contact, Impartiality.

Thunderer's choice: Return To Unit won in emphatic fashion at Nottingham last time and can defy an 8lb rise **Dangers:** Dwindling Funds, Double Parked

7.30 Handicap
(£4,187: 1m) (10)

1 (6) 12646 **QUIET RESOLVE** 17 (CD) A Brown 5-10-1 **S B Kirrane**
2 (3) 0-000 **PINK AZALEA** 64 (D) J & S Quinn 4-9-13 **J Dickson (5)**
3 (4) 3-00 **REAL TROUPER** 19 Craig Lidster 4-9-13 **D Allan**
4 (2) -0026 **TORALOU** 39 (D) M Loughnane 5-9-12 **D Costello**
5 (9) 44435 **EPIDAVROS** 55 (P,C,D) K Scott 5-9-12 **P J McDonald**
6 (10) 03345 **SANAFI ZABEEL** 3 (CD) J Goldie 5-9-9 **P Mulrennan**
7 (8) 04323 **SECOND FIDDLE** 25 (CD) I Jardine 7-9-9 **A Mullen**
8 (7) 0-105 **SOGNIAMO** 25 (C) D O'Meara 3-9-7 **D Tudhope**
9 (5) 50-30 **TURTLE REEF** 33 H Palmer 3-9-5 **A Rawlinson**
10 (1) 32460 **VITALITY** 38 (H) C Johnston 3-9-4 **S D Bowen**

3-1 Sanafi Zabeel, 7-2 Second Fiddle, 6-1 Epidavros, 7-1 Sogniamo, 10-1 Real Trouper, Quiet Resolve, 12-1 Toralou, Vitality, Turtle Reef, 20-1 Pink Azalea.

Thunderer's choice: Second Fiddle twice went close at this track last month and should give another good account **Dangers:** Sanafi Zabeel, Quiet Resolve

8.00 Handicap
(£5,286: 6f) (14)

1 (4) 31641 **STATION X** 59 (D) B Smart 4-9-10 **P Mulrennan**
2 (12) 61310 **TRILBY** 17 (P,T,D) S England 6-9-9 **P J McDonald**
3 (9) 5-542 **TERRITORIAL KNIGHT** 36 (D) K Ryan 4-9-9 **S Gray**
4 (13) 4-600 **MILFORD** 32 (V,C) J Camacho 4-9-9 **D Tudhope**
5 (11) -0516 **NOVAMAY** 25 (D) M Dods 4-9-8 **S B Kirrane**
6 (1) 12-41 **U SURE DO** 95 (T,D) T Easterby 4-9-8 **D Allan**
7 (2) 40-40 **NEVER JUST A DREAM** 32 (D) T Kent 6-9-7 **A Rawlinson**
8 (14) -1220 **PARISIAC** 36 (P,C,D) I Jardine 7-9-3 **J Nicholls (3)**
9 (3) 5-321 **TOP JUGGLER** 32 (CD) S Spencer 4-9-3 **D Swift**
10 (7) 11255 **CARGIN BHUI** 121 (BF,D) D & N Barron 5-9-1 **W Pyle**
11 (8) 0-000 **BERGERAC** 41 (P,C,D) K Ryan 8-9-1 **O McSweeney**
12 (10) 50140 **NOT ME** 15 (P) A Brown 5-8-8 **S D Bowen**
13 (5) 04443 **DANDY MAGIC** 18 (P,BF,D) J Goldie 4-8-7 **Lauren Young (5)**
14 (6) 16130 **IRIS DANCER** 10 (B,CD) T Davidson 8-8-4 **A Mullen**

10-3 Station X, 6-1 U Sure Do, 7-1 Top Juggler, 8-1 Territorial Knight, 10-1 Trilby, Cargin Bhui, 12-1 Parisiac, Novamay.

Thunderer's choice: Station X is a zestful front-runner and is only 2lb higher than when scoring at Chester last time **Dangers:** Dandy Magic, Cargin Bhui

8.30 Handicap
(£3,664: 1m 4f) (9)

1 (3) -0431 **EBONY MAW** 36 (B,T) Ewan Whillans 9-9-12 **P J McDonald**
2 (2) 00151 **PATRICK STREET** 3 (T,D) A Kinirons (Ire) 7-9-12(4ex) **Y Geerdharry (7)**
3 (4) 0-064 **MR WITHINGTON** 11 (B) Ewan Whillans 5-9-9 **G Fairley**
4 (7) /000- **GAME MANAGEMENT** J315 Lizzie Quinlan 5-9-8 **B McHugh**
5 (6) 06-41 **SATYRESS** 49 (D) H Bethell 4-9-7 **S D Bowen**
6 (8) 340-0 **SPIRIT OF NATURE** 15 J Goldie 4-9-7 **P Mulrennan**
7 (5) 06400 **STORM ON JURA** 3 J Goldie 4-9-6 **Lauren Young (5)**
8 (9) 42203 **FALAISE BLANC** 3 (B) K Scott 4-9-4 **J Dickson (5)**
9 (1) 63042 **FAIRYDALE** 20 (B) T Easterby 3-9-0 **D Allan**

3-1 Satyress, 7-2 Ebony Maw, 5-1 Fairydale, 7-1 Patrick Street, Falaise Blanc, 8-1 Mr Withington, 14-1 Game Management, 16-1 Spirit Of Nature, Storm On Jura.

Thunderer's choice: Fairydale upped her game when runner-up at Catterick and another bold bid is on the cards **Dangers:** Satyress, Falaise Blanc

Lingfield

Thunderer

2.30 Shifra
3.00 Desert Sands
3.30 Spirit Of Athene
4.00 Charencey
4.30 Bone Marra
5.00 Prince Ali

Going: standard **Sky Sports Racing**
Draw: 5f-1m, low numbers best

2.30 Handicap
(£3,245: 1m 2f) (14)

1 (5) 0654- **WARRNAMBOOL** 228 N Littmoden 4-9-9 **L Morris**
2 (10) 4-00 **LADY OF CHIVALRY** 36 (T) P Chamings 4-9-9 **C Hutchinson**
3 (14) -1630 **ROMAN SECRET** 28 L Mullaney 5-9-9 **F Marsh**
4 (8) 630-4 **LITTLE TIGER** 63 (P,D) W Stone 6-9-9 **E Greatrex**
5 (3) 5-403 **CHICO DULCE** 34 (CD) M Madgwick 6-9-8 **B Loughnane**
6 (7) 0-021 **SHIFRA** 54 (D) P Phelan 4-9-6 **S C Cronin (5)**
7 (13) 32300 **ARLECCHINO'S REX** 56 (H) M Usher 4-9-4 **C Fallon**
8 (4) 45030 **MOONLIT CLOUD** 8 (P,D) D Ivory 8-9-3 **R Havlin**
9 (2) 62050 **DUBAI HARBOUR** 64 (CD) P Phelan 6-9-2 **P Bradley**
10 (6) 24300 **STACEY RACEY** 21 Kieran Burke 5-9-1 **Josephine Gordon**
11 (1) 00-02 **CRAZY PLAN** 28 Dan Horsford 3-9-1 **J Watson**
12 (9) 6-600 **LADY AIYANA** 54 (T) Mrs I G-Leveque 4-9-0 **B Sayette**
13 (12) 60400 **SUMMER EVENING** 34 (T) D Flood 4-9-0 **T Heard**
14 (11) 500-0 **WARRIORS CHOICE** 70 (P) T Dascombe 3-8-13 **W Cox**

7-2 Shifra, 9-2 Crazy Plan, 11-2 Chico Dulce, 15-2 Little Tiger, 8-1 Warrnambool, Roman Secret, 10-1 Arlecchino's Rex, 14-1 Stacey Racey.

3.00 Novice Stakes
(2-Y-O: £9,180: 5f) (5)

1 (3) 5606 **CRIMSON BLAZE** 11 R Hughes 9-2 **F Marsh**
2 (2) 600 **DESERT SANDS** 32 I Mohammed & J Santos 9-2 **B Sayette**
3 (5) 40 **BIRKACRE BROW** 46 J Tate 8-13 **B Loughnane**
4 (1) 524 **OURAGAN** 12 A Watson 8-13 **L Morris**
5 (4) 00226 **BELLATINA** 27 C Johnston 8-10 **C Fallon**

5-4 Desert Sands, 5-2 Ouragan, 4-1 Bellatina, 8-1 Crimson Blaze, 14-1 Birkacre Brow.

3.30 Handicap
(£10,468: 1m 2f) (10)

1 (2) 22230 **RASTNET** 59 (P) J Butler 4-10-2 **David Egan**
2 (10) 31-30 **DEEDAYDIVA** 94 A King 3-9-11 **L Catton (3)**
3 (7) 51-10 **SHE COMMANDS** 53 R Beckett 3-9-10 **E Greatrex**
4 (9) 2-053 **POMME POMME** 16 (D) J Channon 4-9-9 **Rose Dawes (5)**
5 (4) 130- **RADIANCE** 326 (BF) G Boughey 3-9-8 **B Loughnane**
6 (3) -3522 **DISTANT SHORE** 21 (H,BF) R Varian 3-9-7 **R P Downey**
7 (8) 50310 **BIG BEAR HUG** 29 (D) J Boyle 7-9-4 **P Cosgrave**
8 (5) -2321 **ASSET** 16 Sir M Prescott 3-9-1 **L Morris**
9 (1) 31-21 **SPIRIT OF ATHENE** 13 (C,D) E Walker 3-8-13 **K Shoemark**
10 (6) 03351 **GUESSTIMATE** 25 (D) W Haggas 3-8-10 **C Fallon**

4-1 Distant Shore, 9-2 Radiance, 6-1 Spirit Of Athene, 7-1 She Commands, 15-2 Rastnet, Asset, 8-1 Guesstimate, Deedaydiva.

4.00 Classified Stakes
(£3,245: 1m 4f) (11)

1 (1) 50622 **CHARENCEY** 14 (P,T) I Williams 6-9-9 **B Loughnane**
2 (6) 000 **CRACK OF THUNDER** 15 (P) Jack Jones 4-9-9 **J Watson**
3 (5) 61423 **DINAH MYTE** 14 J Gallagher 4-9-9 **L Morris**
4 (2) -1005 **DOTTIES STAR** 41 (CD) P Phelan 7-9-9 **P Bradley**
5 (9) 5-000 **DUBAI IMMO** 54 (P,T) P Butler 7-9-9 **A Lewis (3)**
6 (8) 40600 **FIGHTING POET** 21 (B,D) R Phillips 8-9-9 **R Havlin**
7 (4) 00032 **FOINIX** 5 (B,BF,D) J & S Best 6-9-9 **F Marsh**
8 (7) 00064 **SUITCASE SMITH** 27 J Berry 4-9-9 **David Egan**
9 (3) 35003 **TIGER BEETLE** 18 (P,T) T Faulkner 8-9-9 **Zoe Lewis (7)**
10 (10) U3452 **WRIST ART** 8 (T) James Owen 9-9-9 **C Howarth (3)**
11 (11) 00-00 **AMALFI BLUEBELL** 34 F Brennan 3-8-13 **T Heard**

5-2 Charencey, 4-1 Dinah Myte, Wrist Art, 5-1 Tiger Beetle, Foinix, 8-1 Suitcase Smith, 20-1 Dotties Star, 66-1 Fighting Poet, Dubai Immo, Amalfi Bluebell, Crack Of Thunder.

4.30 Handicap
(3-Y-O: £5,234: 7f) (7)

1 (2) -2012 **BONE MARRA** 25 (T,BF,D) Ollie Sangster 9-10 **S Donohoe**
2 (3) 50250 **DO BRONXS** 25 D Loughnane 9-9 **D Egan**
3 (6) 110-0 **MALACHY'S WISH** 59 (D) J Osborne 9-8 **S Osborne**
4 (5) 15301 **THREE NON BLONDES** 19 (D) Hayley Burton 9-6 **B Loughnane**
5 (1) -2206 **BRISK SYMPHONY** 24 J Portman 9-6 **J Watson**
6 (7) 061- **SOUFFLER** 293 (D) K P De Foy 9-6 **T Langley (5)**
7 (4) 41006 **PINTS IN PEACE** 38 (D) J & S Best 9-1 **F Marsh**

13-8 Bone Marra, 3-1 Three Non Blondes, 4-1 Souffler, 8-1 Brisk Symphony, 10-1 Do Bronxs, 14-1 Malachy's Wish, 20-1 Pints In Peace.

5.00 Handicap
(£3,245: 7f) (11)

1 (4) 64000 **KING DAVID** 44 (B,D) G Kelleway 5-9-9 **T Moore (7)**
2 (5) 03612 **PRINCE ALI** 18 (P,D) T Faulkner 8-9-8 **Zoe Lewis (7)**
3 (8) -0033 **AFRICAN SPIRIT** 12 (P,T,D) I Williams 5-9-6 **L Catton**
4 (1) 06443 **JACKSON STREET** 10 (CD) M Attwater 5-9-6 **S C Cronin**
5 (2) 06046 **YES WALIIM** 11 R Hughes 3-9-3 **O Hoodless (7)**
6 (6) 02415 **DISTILLATION** 5 (BF,D) M Usher 3-9-1 **D J Murphy (5)**
7 (10) 40630 **ASHFORD HILL** 7 (CD) D F Davis 5-9-0 **Isobelle Chalmers (7)**
8 (3) 0-361 **GAL** 28 (D) M Loughnane 3-9-0 **H Regan (7)**
9 (11) 52564 **TWITCH** 28 (B,D) Craig Benton 9-9-0 **C Tucker (7)**
10 (7) 00-04 **APLACEINTHESUN** 14 Ollie Sangster 3-8-11 **A Lewis**
11 (9) 0545 **MATERIAL GIRL** 11 (P) A Watson 3-8-8 **M Paetel**

4-1 Gal, 11-2 Jackson Street, Prince Ali, 7-1 Distillation, 8-1 Aplaceinthesun, Yes Waliim, African Spirit, 10-1 Twitch.

Carlisle

Thunderer

2.45 Tees George
3.15 Rogue Passion
3.45 Onslaught
4.15 Jenever
4.45 Dance Time
5.15 Leelawadee

Going: good
Draw: 5f-6f, high numbers best Racing TV

2.45 Handicap
(£3,611: 1m) (8)

1 (1) 00215 **HOSTILITY** 38 (CD) D O'Meara 4-10-2 **C Whiteley (3)**
2 (3) 51061 **BAY DREAM BELIEVER** 24 (H,D) M Walford 7-10-1 **K S McHugh (5)**
3 (6) 00060 **IZZARI** 17 (D) I Jardine 5-10-0 **C Tuke (7)**
4 (7) 01220 **PERFIDIA** 14 (P,D) T Easterby 4-9-13 **C Horgan (3)**
5 (4) 04342 **TEES GEORGE** 13 (P,BF,D) Adrian Nicholls 6-9-11 **O Carmichael (5)**
6 (5) 04000 **JEWEL MAKER** 17 (CD) T Easterby 11-9-6 **Amie Waugh**
7 (2) 05060 **RAJAWAIL** 56 (B,T) B Rothwell 6-8-11 **S Farmer (3)**
8 (8) 43045 **BALANCE OF TRADE** J25 Gary Rutherford 3-8-6 **A Jary**

5-2 Bay Dream Believer, 3-1 Tees George, 7-2 Hostility, 5-1 Perfidia, 10-1 Izzari, 14-1 Jewel Maker, Balance Of Trade, 66-1 Rajawail.

3.15 Novice Stakes
(2-Y-O: £7,020: 7f) (5)

1 (1) 5 **GIRL SCOUT** 99 K R Burke 9-2 **C Lee**
2 (3) **LIZZIE BENNET** K Ryan 9-2 **T Eaves**
3 (4) 42 **ROGUE PASSION** 33 (BF) E Bethell 9-2 **O Orr**
4 (5) 6 **SHAQRA QUEEN** 16 K R Burke 9-2 **S James**
5 (2) 02 **SWEET IRIS** 18 R & P Fahey 9-2 **C Hardie**

13-8 Rogue Passion, 10-3 Girl Scout, 7-2 Lizzie Bennet, 9-2 others.

3.45 Nursery
(2-Y-O: £5,496: 5f) (7)

1 (5) 42 **INFLUENCER MAN** 24 A Keatley 9-9 **MP Sheehy**
2 (1) 0363 **BEAUTY FOR LOVE** 25 C Johnston 9-5 **O Orr**
3 (3) 633 **ONSLAUGHT** 16 (B) R & P Fahey 9-4 **J Garritty**
4 (7) 62454 **JAZZ QUEEN** 27 H Palmer 9-2 **J Hart**
5 (2) 3210 **LAURALYNN** 88 (D) D Carroll 9-0 **Z Wheatley**
6 (4) 26622 **CONCERT PITCH** 22 B Ellison 8-13 **B Robinson**
7 (6) 450 **EXCESSIVE** 19 (P) T Easterby 8-11 **D Fentiman**

2-1 Lauralynn, 4-1 Influencer Man, 5-1 Onslaught, 6-1 Concert Pitch, 7-1 Beauty For Love, 8-1 Jazz Queen, 14-1 Excessive.

4.15 Handicap
(£4,187: 6f) (9)

1 (2) 65003 **JENEVER** 21 (B,D) Jessica Macey 7-10-0 **J Hart**
2 (5) 50055 **SIXTYGEESBABY** 21 (T,V,BF,D) D O'Meara 4-10-0 **M Winn**
3 (8) 23015 **STIRRUP CUP** 55 (T,BF,CD) T Easterby 4-10-0 **D Fentiman**
4 (3) 00222 **ANOTHER INVESTMENT** 10 (BF,D) N Tinkler 7-9-13 **A Jary (3)**
5 (6) 44301 **MALDEVIOUS** 10 (P,T,D) B Ellison 4-9-11 **B Robinson**
6 (9) 01531 **GREAT** 6 (CD) S England 4-9-11(5ex) **J England**
7 (1) 52020 **PICKERSGILL** 5 (D) I Jardine 4-9-9 **MP Sheehy**
8 (4) 20450 **SHOWTOWN** 41 (W,P) K Ryan 3-9-4 **T Eaves**
9 (7) 64300 **VALENTINE CATCHER** 39 (P,D) T Easterby 5-9-3 **JP Sullivan**

3-1 Great, 7-2 Another Investment, 5-1 Jenever, 6-1 Maldevious, 7-1 Stirrup Cup, Sixtygeesbaby, 14-1 Pickersgill, 16-1 Showtown, 33-1 Valentine Catcher.

4.45 Handicap
(£5,496: 1m 6f) (8)

1 (2) 0-P35 **TALISMANS TIME** 18 E Bethell 4-10-2 **C Horgan (5)**
2 (7) 2-000 **SAVROLA** 45 (D) D Sayer 7-9-12 **T Eaves**
3 (5) 12112 **SHIPSHAPE** 45 (P,D) B J Llewellyn & Robert Williams 4-9-10 **O Orr**
4 (3) 45003 **DANCE TIME** 25 (D) D Loughnane 6-9-7 **S James**
5 (6) 43554 **LUDO'S LANDING** 10 (B,C) C Johnston 6-9-6 **J Hart**
6 (4) 60303 **GIBSIDE** 18 (C,D) T Easterby 7-9-5 **D Fentiman**
7 (1) 22234 **ASIA FORCE** 41 K R Burke 3-9-2 **C Lee**
8 (8) 00000 **OURO PRETO** 10 I Jardine 5-8-12 **A Brookes**

13-8 Shipshape, 7-2 Asia Force, 5-1 Talismans Time, 7-1 Dance Time, 8-1 Gibside, 10-1 Ludo's Landing, 20-1 Savrola, 33-1 Ouro Preto.

5.15 Handicap
(3-Y-O: £3,611: 7f) (9)

1 (9) 00050 **STORM ESME** 40 (P) T Easterby 9-9 **D Fentiman**
2 (4) 0542 **LEELAWADEE** 26 M Dods 9-9 **M Winn**
3 (1) 11556 **ONLY DREAM BIG** 13 (B,D) T Easterby 9-8 **B Robinson**
4 (5) 33654 **VIVIANA** 28 C Johnston 9-8 **Oisin Orr**
5 (7) 4-400 **DOUWANTITRIGHTNOW** 57 K Ryan 9-8 **T Eaves**
6 (8) 30430 **SPARKLING PINK** 10 (P) Adrian Nicholls 9-4 **J Garritty**
7 (2) 30200 **OASIS COVER** 18 M Hammond 9-4 **A Brookes**
8 (6) 42-50 **YOKO** 12 (H) D Loughnane 9-4 **C Lee**
9 (3) 0-661 **TRULY SPECIAL** 64 (C) J Wainwright 8-13 **J Hart**

9-4 Leelawadee, 10-3 Only Dream Big, 9-2 Sparkling Pink, 11-2 Truly Special, 13-2 Viviana, 12-1 Storm Esme, 25-1 Oasis Cover, Yoko, 50-1 Douwantitrightnow.

Nottingham

Thunderer

5.45 Apulia Bay
6.15 Baddaddan
6.45 Hope Rising (nap)
7.15 The Anthony Gover
7.45 Moulin Booj
8.15 Thunderous Love

Going: good to firm-good in places
Draw: none Racing TV

5.45 Nursery
(2-Y-O: £4,123: 1m) (2)

1 (1) 3100 **TIME FOR THE MOON** 18 C Johnston 9-5 **C Shepherd**
2 (2) 32 **APULIA BAY** 14 (BF) S & E Crisford 9-4 **J Doyle**

1-2 Apulia Bay, 13-8 Time For The Moon.

6.15 Novice Stakes
(2-Y-O: £5,400: 6f) (3)

1 (2) 12 **BLESSED VOYAGER** 18 (BF) R Beckett 9-11 **H Crouch**
2 (3) 4 **BADDADDAN** 24 R Spencer 9-4 **G Wood**
3 (1) **JEYOUSH** (T) S & E Crisford 9-4 **J Doyle**

Evens Blessed Voyager, 2-1 Jeyoush, 10-3 Baddaddan.

6.45 Handicap (£3,402: 2m) (6)

1 (1) -0041 **FREE WORLD** 7 (D) I Williams 5-10-6(5ex) **T Kiely-Marshall (3)**
2 (3) 6442 **JOANNA HIFFERNAN** 28 Owen Burrows 4-10-2 **J Callan**
3 (4) 60/41 **HOPE RISING** 7 J Snowden 5-10-1(5ex) **H Vigors (3)**
4 (5) 00423 **SIMIYANN** 12 (B,D) I Williams 6-9-12 **R Kavanagh**
5 (6) 25343 **ZOOTER** J16 Jack Jones 3-9-6 **C Planas**
6 (2) 0-605 **ASSURED** 27 (P) T R Gretton 5-9-3 **W Fentiman**

6-5 Free World, 9-4 Hope Rising, 9-2 Joanna Hiffernan, 10-1 Zooter, 12-1 Simiyann, 66-1 Assured.

7.15 Handicap (£3,402: 1m 2f) (8)

1 (7) 34513 **BEAUTY GENERATION** 21 (P,CD) R Burdon 5-9-10 **C Shepherd**
2 (5) 13604 **DARETOBEDIFFERENT** 9 (C) D Donovan 3-9-9 **M Ghiani**
3 (6) 656 **DIANE CHASSERESSE** 29 Owen Burrows 3-9-7 **C Rodriguez**
4 (1) 21163 **BRADBURY** 16 (E,T,D) E Bethell 3-9-6 **J Callan**
5 (8) 52300 **TOMMO'S GINJANINJA** 57 M & D Easterby 3-9-6 **Joanna Mason**
6 (3) 60646 **THE ANTHONY GOVER** 33 (P) Dr R Newland Newland 3-9-5 **J Doughty**
7 (4) 40212 **MIDNIGHT MEDIA** 18 (BF) W Muir & C Grassick 3-9-4 **T Marquand**
8 (2) 40024 **KATALYST** 15 (B) W Muir & C Grassick 3-9-4 **R Kavanagh (3)**

11-4 Beauty Generation, 4-1 Diane Chasseresse, 9-2 Midnight Media, 6-1 Bradbury, 7-1 Katalyst, 10-1 Daretobedifferent, 12-1 The Anthony Gover, Tommo's Ginjaninja.

7.45 Handicap
(£5,154: 5f) (7)

1 (6) 56010 **MICHAELA'S BOY** 36 (P,D) R Cowell 6-10-0 **M Ghiani**
2 (4) 63252 **MOULIN BOOJ** 10 (D) G Scott 6-9-8 **T Marquand**
3 (7) 416-0 **FORAGER** 81 (D) S Pearce 4-9-8 **D Probert**
4 (5) 41400 **MESAAFI** 15 (B,D) R Burdon 5-9-7 **C Shepherd**
5 (1) 4-160 **GRANDLAD** 17 (T,CD) James Horton 5-9-7 **K Fraser**
6 (2) 5-304 **GOYARD** 16 (D) D O'Meara 4-9-6 **C Rodriguez**
7 (3) 46100 **JAX EDGE** 29 (D) C Mason 6-9-4 **G Mangan**

9-4 Moulin Booj, 4-1 Michaela's Boy, 5-1 Goyard, 6-1 Grandlad, 7-1 Jax Edge, 8-1 Forager, 10-1 Mesaafi.

8.15 Handicap
(£4,458: 6f) (6)

1 (6) 33450 **COME ON EIBHLIN** 13 (B,T,D) D Cunha 3-9-9 **J Callan**
2 (4) 0321 **SUGAR SUGAR** 12 (E,D) J Channon 3-9-7 **G Bass**
3 (5) 13430 **SEEING STARS** 19 (P,BF) W Knight 3-9-7 **M Ghiani**
4 (1) 040 **SWEET DESIRE** 58 Steph Hollinshead 4-9-7 **G Wood**
5 (2) 60602 **THUNDEROUS LOVE** 17 (P,CD) J Portman 5-9-6 **R Hornby**
6 (3) 31213 **MELISSA HONEY** 13 (BF,D) M Herrington 4-9-0 **D Probert**

9-4 Sugar Sugar, 3-1 Thunderous Love, 7-2 Melissa Honey, 5-1 Seeing Stars, 8-1 Come On Eibhlin, 14-1 Sweet Desire.

Results

Cricket

The Hundred Men: Trent Rockets v Southern Brave
Trent Bridge (Southern Brave won toss and elected to bowl): Southern Brave (4pts) beat Trent Rockets (0) by six wickets

Trent Rockets		(balls)
B M Duckett c Miller b Stoinis	17	(14)
F H Allen b Jordan	23	(12)
A H T Donald c Stoinis b Worrall	19	(9)
*†S W Billings c Ali b Chaudhary	13	(12)
T H David c Stubbs b Rashid	15	(12)
M J Santner not out	35	(23)
L Gregory not out	28	(18)
Extras (lb 2 w 6)	8	
Total (5 wkts, 100 balls)	**158**	

C Overton, C G Harrison, M J Henry, B W Sanderson did not bat.
Fall of wickets 1-17, 2-40, 3-62, 4-84, 5-92.
Bowling Worrall 4-0-21-1; Stoinis 3-0-29-1; Lumsden 1-0-19-0; Jordan 3-0-28-1; Rashid 4-0-25-1; Chaudhary 3-0-20-1; Ali 2-0-14-0.

Southern Brave		(balls)
†J L Smith c Harrison b Overton	26	(18)
M M Ali c & b Harrison	17	(14)
T Stubbs not out	52	(28)
D A Miller b Harrison	14	(10)
M P Stoinis b Sanderson c Duckett	46	(25)
N Chaudhary not out	3	(2)
Extras (lb 1)	1	
Total (4 wkts, 97 balls)	**159**	

C J Jordan, C M Falconer, A U Rashid, M Lumsden, D J Worrall did not bat.
Fall of wickets 1-42, 2-60, 3-78, 148-4.
Bowling Sanderson 4-0-36-1; Overton 4-0-18-1; Henry 3-0-26-0; Gregory 2.2-0-24-0; Harrison 2-0-32-2; Santner 4-0-21-0.

	P	W	L	T	NR	NRR	Pts
Trent Rockets	8	6	2	0	0	0.740	24
SR Leeds	7	5	2	0	0	1.094	20
Manchester SG	7	4	3	0	0	0.495	16
MI London	7	4	3	0	0	0.262	16
Welsh Fire	7	4	3	0	0	-1.001	16
Southern Brave	8	3	5	0	0	-0.015	12
London Spirit	7	2	5	0	0	-0.151	8
Birmingham P	7	1	6	0	0	-1.496	4

Women: Trent Rockets v Southern Brave
Trent Bridge (Trent Rockets won toss and elected to bowl): Trent Rockets (4pts) beat Southern Brave (0) by three wickets

Southern Brave		(balls)
M E Bouchier lbw b Adams	38	(33)
†L Lee c Phillips b Elwiss	31	(28)
*L Wolvaardt c Gardner b Garth	24	(21)
C R Knott not out	15	(10)
J L Grewcock b Adams	0	(1)
P A Franklin b Bates	2	(4)
N D Dattani not out	3	(3)
Extras (b 1, w 3)	4	
Total (5 wkts, 20 overs)	**117**	

S Glenn, I E C M Wong, L K Bell and M R Corteen-Coleman did not bat.
Fall of wickets 1-49, 2-95, 3-99, 4-99, 5-102.
Bowling Garth 4-0-25-1; Bates 4-0-24-1; Phillips 3-0-17-0; Elwiss 2-0-15-1; Gardner 3-0-21-0; Adams 4-0-14-2.

Trent Rockets		(balls)
S I R Dunkley b Corteen-Coleman	1	(5)
†B L Mooney c Lee b Wong	6	(11)
S N Luff run out	1	(6)
*A K Gardner c Franklin b C-Coleman	37	(25)
B A M Heath c Grewcock b Glenn	18	(19)
G L Adams run out	10	(7)
N R Sciver-Brunt run out	32	(19)
G A Elwiss not out	10	(4)
K J Garth not out	1	(2)
Extras (w 2)	2	
Total (7 wkts, 19.3 overs)	**118**	

C N Phillips and S L Bates did not bat.
Fall of wickets 1-2, 2-6, 3-10, 4-63, 5-66, 6-100, 7-117.
Bowling Bell 4-0-20-0; Corteen-Coleman 4-0-16-2; Wong 4-0-31-1; Glenn 4-0-19-1; Knott 3.3-0-32-0.

	P	W	L	T	NR	NRR	Pts
Trent Rockets	8	7	1	0	0	1.391	28
Southern Brave	8	5	3	0	0	0.107	20
Manchester SG	7	4	2	0	1	0.752	18
SR Leeds	7	4	3	0	0	0.865	16
Welsh Fire	7	3	4	0	0	0.042	12
London Spirit	7	2	4	1	0	-0.306	10
MI London	7	1	5	1	0	-1.275	6
Birmingham P	7	1	5	0	1	-1.984	6

Football

Carabao Cup
Plymouth (0) **2** **Exeter** (0) **0**
Hartridge 90+2
Pepple 90+4

Tennis

Canadian Open
Men's singles: Round of 16 J Mensik (Cz) (13) bt B van de Zandschulp (Neth) 6-4 7-5.
Women's singles: Round of 16 N Osaka (Japan) (11) bt L Fernandez (Can) (30) 6-4 6-4; B Bencic (Switz) (12) bt A Eala (Phil) (25) 6-4 6-0.

Athletics

European Championships, Birmingham
Women's 100m: Final 1, A Hunt (GB) 11.00sec; 2, E Swoboda (Pol) 11.02; 3, D Nkansa (Bel) 11.06.
Men's 5,000m: Final 1, J Ingebrigtsen (Nor) 13min 15.29sec; 2, F Bremm (Ger) 13:15.60; 3, E Daguinos (Fr) 13:16.09.
Mixed 4x400m relay: Final 1, Nor 3:09:62; 2, GB 3:10:37; 3, Neth 3:10:77.
Men's shot put: Final 1, L Fabbri (It) 22.31m; 2, Z Weir (It) 21.12; 3, W Petersson (Swe) 20.97.
Women's shot put: Final 1, J Schilder (Neth) 20.73m; 2, J van Klinken (Neth) 19.64; 3, Y Mabry (Ger) 19.50.

Fixtures

Cricket

The Hundred (Old Trafford) Manchester Super Giants v SunRisers Leeds (women 2.45, men 6.30).
One Day Cup
Group A Gloucestershire v Northamptonshire Steelbacks (Cheltenham); Somerset v Lancashire (Taunton); Surrey v Notts Outlaws (Oval); Warwickshire v Kent (Rugby).
Group B Essex v Yorkshire (Chelmsford); Hampshire v Derbyshire Falcons (Utilita Bowl); Middlesex v Sussex Sharks (Radlett); Worcestershire Rapids v Durham (Worcester).

Athletics

European Championships, Birmingham
Finals: Men's hammer (7.10); Women's 5,000m (7.25); Men's long jump (8.16); Women's 100m hurdles (9.30); Men's 100m (9.45).

Tennis

Canadian Open
Men's singles: Quarter-finals L Tien (US) (12) v D Merida (Sp); J Mensik (Cz) (13) v B Shelton (US) (5).
Women's singles: Quarter-finals N Osaka (Japan) (11) v E Rybakina (Kaz) (2); B Bencic (Switz) (12) v C Gauff (US) (4).

Yesterday's racing results

Ayr

Going: Good to Soft (good in places)

1.45 (6f) 1, **Next Of Kin** (Cieren Fallon, 10-11 fav); 2, Myesme (5-1); 3, Ashina (12-1). 8 ran. nk, 2l. W J Haggas.

2.15 (1m) 1, **Hostelry** (Joanna Mason, 5-2); 2, Due Respect (9-1); 3, Millbuie (11-4). 10 ran. NR: Sanny Doo. 2l, ½l. Mrs R Carr.

2.45 (7f 50yd) 1, **Catton Lady** (Joanna Mason, 12-1); 2, Novak (7-1); 3, Keep Me Stable (9-1). 12 ran. NR: Gressington. 1l, 1l. M & D Easterby.

3.15 (1m 2f) 1, **Obito** (D Tudhope, 9-2); 2, Star Cast (6-1); 3, Mano Chicago (11-1). 13 ran. 27½l, sh. D O'Meara.

3.45 (6f) 1, **White Umbrella** (T Eaves, 12-1); 2, Macedonian (16-1); 3, Edmond Halley (3-1). 13 ran. NR: Monastere, Water Of Leith. ¾l, 1¼l. C N Kellett.

4.15 (1m 2f) 1, **Naturalia** (P Mulrennan, 3-1 fav); 2, Recobella (13-2); 3, Idyllic (5-1). 12 ran. hd, ½l. D W Whillans.

4.45 (1m 2f) 1, **West Tyrone** (Shane Gray, 14-1); 2, Tee Aitch Aye (7-2); 3, Ceinture D'orion (17-2). 11 ran. NR: Onyeisi. ¾l, ¾l. Lizzie Quinlan.

Placepot:£103.80

Quadpot:£64.00

Jackpot:£0.00

Kempton

Going: Standard / Slow

2.30 (7f) 1, **Tikka** (D Muscutt, 11-2); 2, Rhythm Of My Heart (11-4 fav); 3, Hidden Beyond (5-1). 12 ran. 3l, 1½l. J R Fanshawe.

3.00 (7f) 1, **Tredegar Square** (D Muscutt, 16-1); 2, Thespian Queen (17-2); 3, Reichenbach Falls (33-1). 12 ran. 2¼l, nk. J R Fanshawe.

3.30 (1m) 1, **Magical Life** (D Egan, 3-1 fav); 2, Bollengo Boy (3-1 fav); 3, Ten Of Clubs (10-1). 9 ran. 6½l, 1¼l. J S Moore.

4.00 (1m) 1, **Fallacious Promise** (L Morris, 3-1); 2, Santiago Boy (50-1); 3, Alkumatic Jo Jo (18-1). 14 ran. 3l, sh. J Butler.

4.30 (1m 2f 219yd) 1, **Flightofthephoenix** (J Watson, 10-3 fav); 2, Hot Silk (7-1); 3, Ghost Story (4-1). 10 ran. hd, ¾l. C Hills.

5.00 (1m 7f 218yd) 1, **Senor Cortez** (J Callan, 8-1); 2, Maxident (2-1 fav); 3, Believitanducan (3-1). 12 ran. 5½l, nk. J Butler.

Placepot:£202.80

Quadpot:£11.40

Windsor

Going: Good to Firm

5.45 (1m 2f) 1, **Mythological Star** (C Howarth, 2-1 fav); 2, Shady Bay (9-2); 3, Just An Hour (9-4). 6 ran. nk, 1l. D & C Kubler.

6.15 (6f 12yd) 1, **Keep Kicking On** (H Crouch, 7-2); 2, Everatease (8-1); 3, Harry Knows (4-5 fav). 5 ran. sh, nk. C G Cox.

6.45 (6f 12yd) 1, **Real Bullet** (B Loughnane, 6-5); 2, Wateera (8-11); 3, Major Looktwice (22-1). 5 ran. NR: Goldtrader. 2l, 2¼l. G Boughey.

7.15 (6f 12yd) 1, **Trefor** (K Shoemark, 13-2); 2, Diligently (11-2); 3, Indian Run (11-1). 16 ran. ½l, nk. C Hills.

7.45 (1m 31yd) 1, **Moonswept** (E Nader, 17-2); 2, Mystic Music (50-1); 3, Sterling Fortune (9-2). 8 ran. 1l, hd. D & C Kubler.

8.15 (1m 31yd) 1, **My Old Mate** (B Loughnane, 8-15); 2, Torbados (11-1); 3, Creciente (9-2). 10 ran. 4l, sh. G & J Moore.

Placepot:£277.60

Quadpot:£34.00

Devalued cup resurrected my career

Cameron Steel says his experience of One-Day Cup shows why it still has value to the game — despite greater allure of the Hundred

TOM DULAT/ECB/GETTY IMAGES

Tim Seifert, right, and Paul Walter walk out to bat for Manchester Super Giants in the Hundred against Southern Brave

The Hollies Stand foxes have been hunted. Mascot costumes have been collecting dust in county storage cupboards for nearly a fortnight. Commentator Charles Dagnall has reportedly recovered from his on-screen somersault. David Willey's shoes are once again secured to his feet, and the men's T20 Blast trophy is safely stowed at Wantage Road.

After the men's and women's T20 Finals Days, the low rumble of plastic wheels signals the seasonal split of changing rooms; an annual migration of cricketing status and skill, as cricket bags are rolled from county changing rooms, and players, coaches and administrators alike set off in different directions for their summer secondments. This period in the cricketing calendar is apportioned to the Hundred and the Metro Bank One-Day Cup. In format, flair and logistical realities, the divergences between the two competitions epitomise the game's ever-evolving state of flux, and it divides opinion and personnel like no other in English cricket.

Has the Hundred saved the English game or hastened its decline? Is it a phoney format? Could women's cricket have grown as quickly without it? Should we love it or loathe it? Why on earth is the Oval team pronounced "My London"? And can Manchester's footballing factions *really* set aside their differences and be wedded under the Super Giants' elephant?

While these debates will rage for many years, most of them live outside of the dressing rooms that provide the ECB's festival of franchise with its talent. Very rarely are players asked about what it means to them. Rather than argue about the suitability of scorecards, intentions of stakeholders or legitimacy of formats, player discussion naturally diverts to cricketing realities and latent opportunities.

Involvement or exclusion from England's flagship offering is now a barometer for the state of a professional cricket career. For better or for worse, the One-Day Cup is no longer a premier competition and however devoted they might be to the counties that nurture them, it is not where players strive to be.

It is easy, but probably unhelpful, to be cynical about the synthetic song and dance that complements the Hundred spectacle. The most scintillating of skillsets are unfairly abstracted by the paid influencers, DJ sets, hastily invented team songs and cringeworthy marketing campaigns. Behind all this content-cum-crack-cocaine-for-kids is a tournament that, for aspiring players, is right at the forefront of their ambitions. For the 250 or so men and women playing the Hundred, it is no less about cricket or professional pride than any other format; it's a ruthless test of bodies and dexterities.

Of course, enhanced earnings are a factor in its magnetism. To limit the lure to finance is, however, lazy. Most appealing is what the Hundred represents. As well as a fresh experience at the forefront of the game, it is a gateway to nuggets of knowledge, glamour and, most important, greater opportunity.

While lacking the tribalism of other formats and sports, the Hundred offers players a chance to perform in the rarefied and pressurised world of pay packets, packed stadiums, and transmission across two airwaves. Whether in search of Test selection, franchise riches or status at their county, every cricketer knows that, whatever the format, no runs or wickets carry weight quite like those on Sky Sports.

Personnel provides its own pull; in the star-studded squads and support staff of the Hundred, there is an opportunity to learn while you earn. Thanks to Jacob Bethell and the IPL, it's in vogue to sit either side of the fence and celebrate or denigrate the value of being surrounded by the world's foremost talent. Yet cricketers, like most ambitious athletes, will for ever be attracted by their heroes, or by international opponents whom they wish to dislike but truly admire. Insatiable appetites for improvement will never change: the lure of tactics from other continents, new tricks and potential technical panacea is strong.

Perhaps most alluring is the route to further glamour and winters abroad. Strong performances as well as co-operative captains or coaches can open doors to the franchise circuit: cricket's El Dorado. This is an evolving and almost mythical sphere of five-star hotels, golf courses and suntans in January. In the eyes of the uninitiated, it's a world devoid of Yo-Yo fitness tests in indoor schools, intense media scrutiny and 20 overs into the breeze. It's more money for less work in a realm that extends all the way to Dallas and Dhaka.

This is the lens through which the One-Day Cup and its players must be understood. Those in the shadows of the Hundred don't swap homes for hotels, or tour between England's biggest cities on luminously wrapped buses. Rather, cricket clobber must be kept in cars, closets or close by, for games played in cherished but lesser-known corners of the cricket world.

With the opulence stripped away, the unique reality of each player and club in the competition is clearer to comprehend. A team shorn of key talent, players and staff must coalesce and continue to do their best: to challenge for silverware, while staying fit and continuing to develop. Players must act as understudies to the main event while trying to achieve something else entirely. Ready, willing and perhaps pining for a late call-up.

An academy player, triallist or loanee might earn themselves a contract or some professional experience. A rookie might cement a role at the top of the order. A twentysomething might gain captaincy or leadership experience, perhaps putting his name forward for a spot in the T20 or County Championship, or, dare I say, the Hundred. Senior players might get a rest. Other senior players might be depressed or deflated; a missed draft, auction or wild card is a galling experience; eight physically demanding games and then rubbing salt into the wounds of a creaking body. The most unfortunate might not be selected at all. Others might be returning fleetingly from the Hundred to find form or help their counties.

A player anecdote that lives in the minds of all One-Day Cup players is the story of Tim David.

One of the highest-paid players in this year's Hundred at a whopping £350,000, one might not expect that an innings in front of a sparse crowd in the 2021 Royal London One-Day Cup helped to ignite his cricketing ascendancy. Despite already having enjoyed success in the Big Bash League and Pakistan Super League that year, David bludgeoned 140 not out from 70 balls against a shellshocked Warwickshire. It was from this innings that Southern Brave, the Caribbean Premier League and, later, Royal Challengers Bangalore came calling, kickstarting the globetrotting career that so many players now crave.

In that same period, my own experience of the 50-over competition changed drastically. Since the inception of the Hundred, and with so many players missing, it was the start of my journey at the largest domestic club in the world. A debut for Surrey was an honour. It was the first step in resurrecting a broken career, showing people that I was a leg spinner to be taken seriously. By the end, the One-Day Cup was a millstone around my neck; a challenge for my ailing ankle, and a reminder that my skills weren't sufficient for El Dorado. Now that I'm out of the game and fortunate enough to commentate on several teams and formats, I'm loving it again.

Success in the cricket ladder used to be simpler. Even when I started at Taunton Vale in 2013, runs and wickets in the second XI could get you to the first XI. Thirteen years later, cricket and its accomplishments are fragmented into a plethora of personal definitions of what the opportunity is.

The Hundred marketing likes to advertise that "Every Ball Counts", as though they didn't before. No one can predict which ball, on which broadcast, in front of which crowd, or in which competition, is going to be the one that matters most.

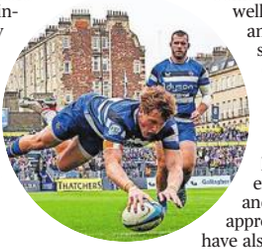
Bath may play two home league games at Reading FC stadium

Rugby union
Will Kelleher
Deputy Rugby Correspondent

Bath will have to play their two final Gallagher Prem home games — and a potential play-off semi-final — away from the Recreation Ground in 2027.

The club have brought forward the construction of their new stadium, which they are aiming to complete by the start of the 2028-29 season. Having done so, and also shortened the time it will take to create the new ground by 18 months, they must move out earlier than expected.

Bath are in contact with a number of grounds as they look for a temporary home. The Times understands that Reading's Select Car Leasing Stadium, which held London Irish matches between 2000 and 2020 and has a 24,000-seat capacity, is considered Bath's most likely option. The club's final genuine home match next season will be on April 17 against Newcastle Red Bulls. They will then need to play elsewhere for the games against Harlequins on May 15 and Saracens on June 5. If Bath finish in the top two, they will also forgo home advantage in the play-off semi-finals. Bath are believed to be exploring using a ground within their academy boundaries, which includes parts of Somerset and Hampshire, as well as Dorset, Wiltshire and Berkshire. It is understood that Bath discussed a groundshare with Gloucester, but a deal has not materialised. It is also unlikely they will play "home" league games at Twickenham's Allianz Stadium and the RFU has not been approached by Bath. Bath have also not approached Bristol Bears about sharing Ashton Gate. Bath's chief executive Tarquin McDonald wrote to supporters yesterday: "We are in discussion with alternative host venues and we will update you once the location for these fixtures is confirmed."



The Rec will undergo a £70 million rebuild

McDonald said that fans would be reimbursed if they could not attend the relocated fixtures. Bath will continue to play at The Rec in 2027-28, while the ground is being rebuilt. They are expanding the stadium from 14,500 seats to 18,000, and the whole redevelopment will cost in the region of £70 million.

Mourinho's vulnerability only appears for his father

Alyson Rudd

Senior Sports Writer

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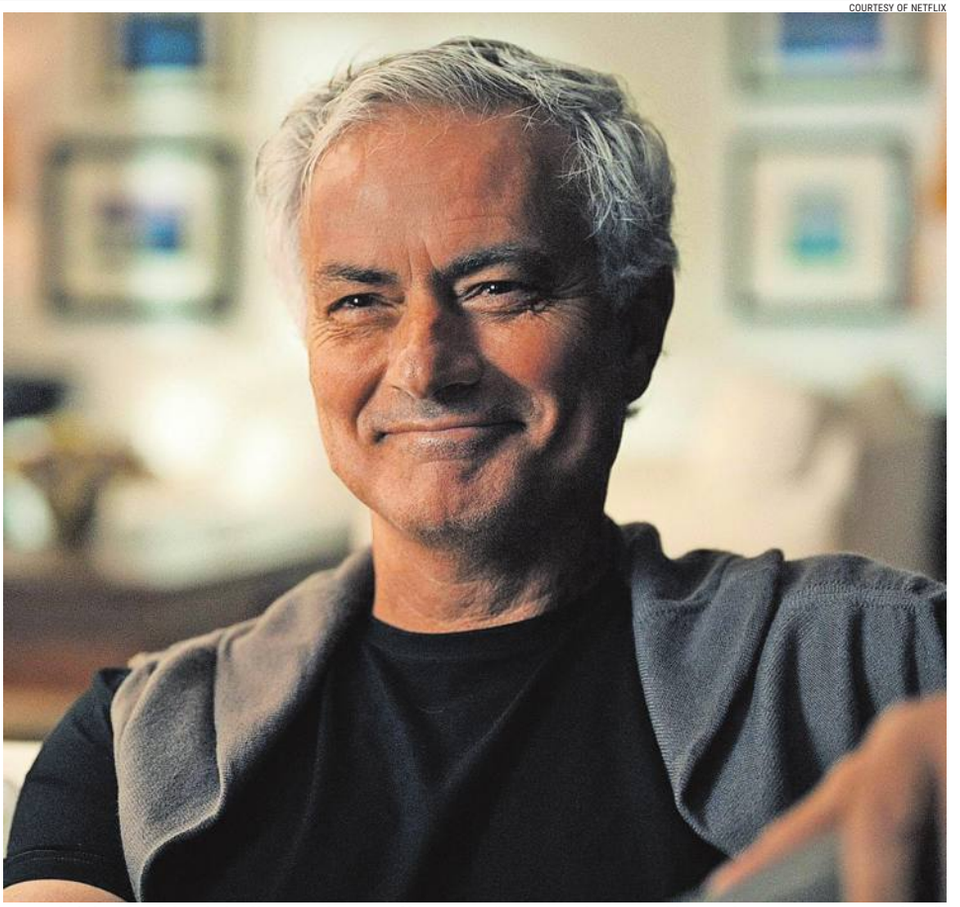


Mourinho's bond with his dad, Félix, is at the core of his career: "He was a phenomenal human being, I am not even close"

Three hours of José Mourinho is tough, like that glass of dessert wine when you are full from a sickly chocolate mousse or, perhaps more relevantly, when you have your own magic Mourinho moments and wish to preserve them in isolation, not as part of a massive tapestry that, well, becomes a bit repetitive.

The Portuguese arrives, he conquers and then he fails. Usually in his third season, if not sooner.

This is not to say *MOURINHO*, the new Netflix documentary series, is unwatchable, rather a warning to take your time between episodes. Mourinho was not made for binge-watching.

Does this series give us the real Mourinho? Maybe. But it is a version we have seen before. Slightly sulky, arrogant, dismissive but also articulate and very clever. The most captivating moments were not the titles he won, or the cup runs, but when he was making his way in the game, feeling he had to work much harder than anyone else because he had not been a success as a player. His list of jobs when assistant to Louis van Gaal at Barcelona was so darned extensive, I half expected him to say he had to give the Dutch coach a pedicure every Tuesday.

You do not leave this show feeling Mourinho has not earned his accolades and his money. But neither do you feel he was pushed very hard to delve into his methodology.

Are you not curious about people, he is asked. No, he says, he is interested in careers. That is, after all, why they are making the documentary, isn't it?

Any book about a successful person, he argues, should contain five of 500 pages about that individual's childhood and yet it seems clear his own childhood and his relationship with Félix, his father, a football coach who was sacked on Christmas Day, is at the heart of his ambition. Even now he cannot talk about his father's death and this provides the only moment of vulnerability as he taps the table to ward off the tears.

His father, he says, was the opposite of him in that everybody loved Félix: he was "a phenomenal human being, I am not even close".

There was controversy in his career, but this is not a show keen on investigation. The Dr Eva Carneiro case was prolonged and deeply uncomfortable at the time, but here Mourinho simply states: "For me, a lady doctor is the same as a man doctor. So I use my vocabulary when I'm not happy." Carneiro told an employment tribunal that Mourinho called her "daughter of a whore" when she ran on to the pitch to treat Eden Hazard.

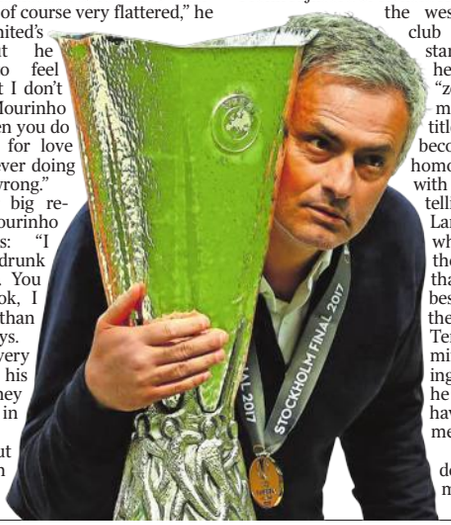
Mourinho does not really believe in injuries. John Terry relates how his former manager once entered the physio room and chatted merrily and even hugged staff but ignored his defender simply because he was injured.

"If it's a pain you cannot cope [with]; inject," Mourinho reflects.

The one bombshell delivered by the show is that Mourinho, in his own words, "signed" for Manchester United in 2013 only to tearfully tell Sir Alex Ferguson he needed to return to Chelsea. "I was of course very flattered," he says of United's offer, but he needed to feel loved. "But I don't regret," Mourinho says. "When you do something for love you are never doing anything wrong."

Another big reveal is Mourinho telling us: "I never got drunk in my life. You look, I look, I see more than you," he says.

We see very little of his family. They appear in occasional clips, but mostly in photographs on his shelves, and it is poignant when he tells us they have a nicer time without him when visiting restaurants, for example.



His joining Chelsea felt predestined. He was a spiky manager who knew it was easier to get a big job if you were Frank Rijkaard or Ronald Koeman and the west London club were upstarts with, as he points out, "zero" Premier League titles. Here it becomes a little homoerotic with Mourinho telling Frank Lampard, who was in the shower, that he is the best player in the world and Terry a bit miffed, looking back, that he did not have a shower meeting too.

Mostly the documentary explores his motivational skills but the tactical secret to his first spell of success at Chelsea was to make sure training was as tough, if not tougher, than the real thing.

"I'm not nice," Mourinho says after being asked to reflect on the Anders Frisk controversy, when he accused the Swedish referee of colluding with Rijkaard when Chelsea faced Barcelona in 2005, leading to Frisk receiving death threats. But he says he's not nice "with pride". In no sense is he more reflective now than he was then.

Then we are taken back in time. "Was I naive, arrogant? I don't think so," he says of promising to win the title when he was appointed Porto manager.

"That was the moment when I introduced myself to the world," he says of the famous run down the touchline after beating United in the Champions League round of 16. He says he can still feel the weight of the coat he wore and indeed it looks, now, a desperately heavy garment for a sprint.

"I can be really nasty, aggressive," he says when recalling labelling Arsène Wenger a voyeur. But he offers no regrets. "So it was a great time, yeah," he says of winning his second title with Chelsea, as if remembering a nice bit of Camembert on toast. This was because he had less power behind the scenes.

Lampard says he could tell the mood had changed, that his manager was not quite as in control. Perhaps that was the fallout of "Voyeurgate", which reflected badly on the club. "I never had a moment of doubt, why should I? Why?"

He wanted Samuel Eto'o but he got Andriy Shevchenko going into his fourth season at the Bridge and this annoys him still. "Success shouldn't be a curse," Mourinho says when discussing being sacked by Roman Abramovich, adding he thought he was popular with the people but not with the ownership.

He left Chelsea for Inter Milan when Barça felt the more natural move, but he is stony-faced about that. He turned Zlatan Ibrahimovic into "a killer", says the striker. But Ibrahimovic leaves Inter for Barcelona. The best bit of the show is Ibrahimovic telling us Mourinho tells him he knows he has gone to Barcelona to win the Champions League but Mourinho will win it at Inter.

"You little f***er," relives the Swede, capturing the moment it dawned on him that Mourinho may just do that — and he does because he got Eto'o in return for Zlatan plus some cash.

The Real Madrid years are worth reliving because he is back there now and a man with absolutely no regrets.

"With my career," he says, "I won the right to be happy."

Derby takeover collapses after Saudi boxing supremo pulls out

Tom Kershaw

Derby County have been left stunned after Saudi Arabian boxing powerbroker Turki Al-Sheikh backed out of a proposed deal to buy a majority stake in the Championship club at the 11th hour.

The Times revealed in May that Al-Sheikh, an adviser in Saudi Arabia's royal court who serves as the head of the General Entertainment Authority, was in advanced talks to purchase Derby from David Clowes, who saved the club from liquidation in 2022. Al-Sheikh satisfied the Independent Football Regulator (IFR) and the English Football League (EFL) that his wealth was separate to that of the Saudi Public Investment Fund and was cleared to complete the deal last week. However, in an about-face that shocked Derby chiefs, Al-Sheikh abruptly called off the takeover yesterday, five days before the beginning of the season.

A statement from Derby read: "The club can confirm discussions with Lion Sport [the group headed by Al-Sheikh] to buy a controlling interest in Derby County will no longer proceed. The purchase process had been sanctioned by both the Independent Football Regulator and the EFL, notification of which the club received last week.

"However, today the club received notice that Lion Sport no longer wanted to continue with the purchase. The club is now off the market and will continue to operate under the loyal, committed and unwavering support of Clowes Developments. Our preparations continue for the new EFL season, beginning against Charlton Athletic on Saturday."

Al-Sheikh took to social media shortly afterwards and implied that the time taken by the IFR to approve the takeover was key to him pulling out of the deal. The approval process took 55 days — 90 days are permitted — and, given the complexities of the case because of Al-Sheikh's longstanding relationship with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and his role as a government minister, there is understood to be scepticism about whether other factors could be at hand. "I would like to thank everyone at Derby County Football Club, and everyone involved in this process for all their hard work over the past few months," Al-Sheikh said in a statement.

"We understood that the IFR process takes time and fully respect the importance of that, but unfortunately with the season already started, it would leave us with no time to prepare the team or the club for the season ahead. After careful consideration, we don't feel it is right to proceed without the necessary preparation in place, but we will remain in conversation with the club and see what is possible in the future."

Araújo's pay cut for Liverpool loan

Paul Joyce
Northern Football Correspondent

Ronald Araújo has accepted a wage cut to facilitate his loan move from Barcelona to Liverpool and is ready to play straight away for his new head coach Andoni Iraola.

The defender's determination to take an unexpected chance to switch to the Anfield club has involved him accepting a lower salary than he would have received had he stayed at the Nou Camp. Liverpool will cover all of his wages but will not pay a loan fee and have an option, rather than an obligation, to buy him for £47 million next summer.

"I think it was the ideal move for me at this stage in my career," said Araújo, who will wear the No 33 shirt. "As soon as I heard that interest from Liverpool, everything went into action really, really quickly."

Liverpool's immediate focus is for him to bolster a defence that has been beset by fitness issues. Joe Gomez, Giovanni Leoni and Conor Bradley will all miss the start of the new season while Jérémy Jacquet has not played for the club so far during pre-season, although he should feature against Como in a friendly at Anfield on Sunday.

Araújo's versatility as both a right back and in his preferred centre-back position means he has a strong opportunity to start against Newcastle United on the opening weekend of the new Premier League campaign.

The 27-year-old Uruguay international will train later this week but is in good physical condition after his recent work with Barcelona and is in a positive mindset to seize the moment.

Araújo made 38 appearances for Barcelona last season despite taking a break from football between the end of November and early January to work on his mental health.

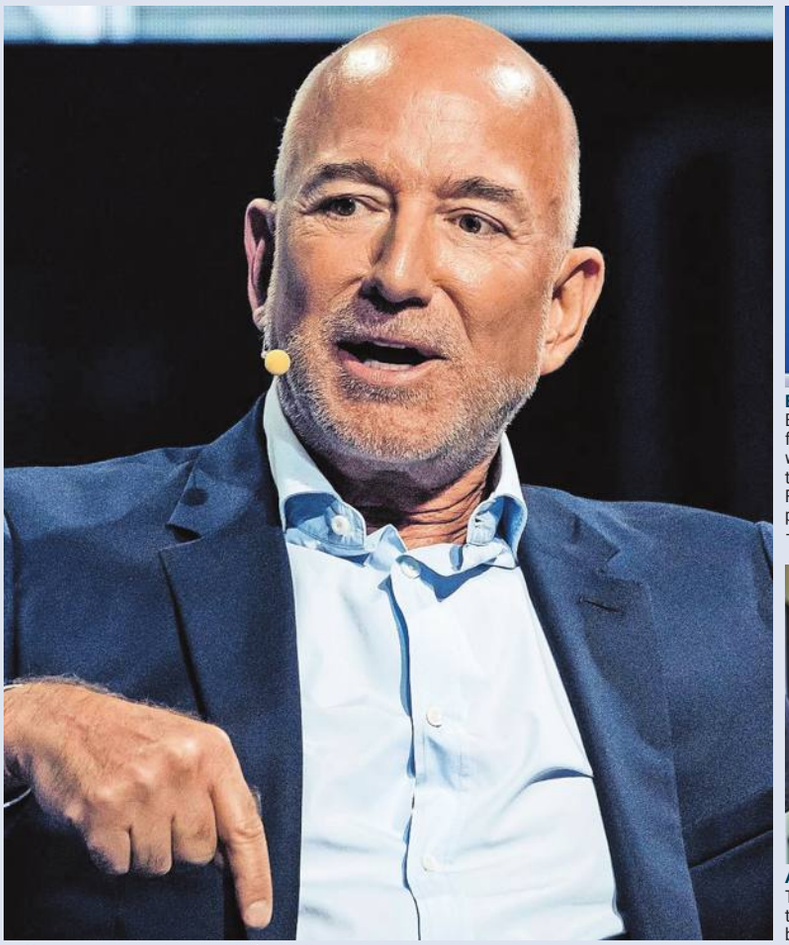
He was heavily criticised after being sent off in a 3-0 Champions League defeat against Chelsea and later revealed he had been battling against anxiety and depression for 18 months.

"It was not just related to sport, it was also on a family and personal level," he told Mundo Deportivo in February. "I didn't feel myself and that moment [the red card at Chelsea] served as a click to say, 'Something is happening, I need to ask for help.'

"I am the type of person that usually keeps everything to myself, but you have to understand there are professionals that can help you, that can give you the tools to manage certain situations. I needed to ask for help and explain what I was going through to be able to recover."

Araújo travelled to religious sites in Bethlehem and Jerusalem and spent time with his family before returning to help Barcelona win La Liga as captain.

EVA MARIE UZCATEGUI/BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES



Jeff Bezos *estimated net worth: $280 billion*
Ranked by Forbes as the third-richest person in the world. Founded Amazon in 1994 as an online bookshop. Owns the Washington Post and aerospace manufacturer Blue Origin.

Eduardo Saverin *estimated net worth: $33 billion*
Born in Brazil and based in Singapore, Saverin is best known as co-founder of Facebook. He met Mark Zuckerberg at Harvard in 2002, where the pair started the social media website, which has more than three billion monthly users. Saverin split from Zuckerberg and Facebook in 2005 after a bitter feud between the pair. Saverin was part of a consortium that launched a failed bid for Chelsea in 2022 — losing out to the group led by Todd Boehly and Clearlake.

Amit Bhatia *estimated net worth: $23 billion*
The British-Indian businessman is leading the consortium to buy this stake in Liverpool. He started his career as an investment banker, before moving into construction, real estate and private equity. He has previous experience in sport, most recently stepping down as co-owner and director of QPR in July after 18 seasons. He is the son-in-law of the steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal.

CONTINUED FROM BACK

Deal close for Liverpool stake

2027 and discussions over possible extensions are under way.

The Times contacted FSG but it declined to comment on how negotiations were progressing. As the deal is for more than 25 per cent of the club, it would be subject to the Premier League's owners' and directors' test and the new independent football regulator before being finalised.

FSG bought Liverpool in October 2010 for £300 million from US businessmen Tom Hicks and George Gillett and has since transformed the club's fortunes — they have won the Premier League twice and the Champions League.

The second of those league title successes came in 2025 and since then Liverpool have spent about £550 million on strengthening their squad with the expectation that there will be further expenditure over the remainder of the summer transfer window. Paris Saint-Germain attacker Bradley Barcola is a target and valued at £145 million by the French champions.

Liverpool have also successfully revamped Anfield, expanding the capacity to 61,000, and built a state-of-the-art training ground in Kirkby which amalgamated the first team and academy set-ups.

The looming deal with Bhatia's consortium, and the size of the stake being sold, has fuelled debate on whether FSG is beginning an exit strategy. Liverpool principal owner John W Henry has been open about the fact FSG will look to sell one day but, in the short term, the deal will strengthen the business.

It is a similar move to when a 3 per cent stake was sold to Dynasty Equity in 2023 for about £120 million.

At the time, FSG president Mike Gordon, who has resumed the day-to-day running of Liverpool after the departure of FSG chief executive of football Michael Edwards last month, said: "Our long-term commitment to Liverpool remains as strong as ever.

"We have always said that if there is an investment partner that is right for Liverpool then we would pursue the opportunity to help ensure the club's long-term financial resiliency and future growth."

Clearly if FSG decided to sell more of the club in the future, then the relationship with the Bhatia syndicate and Dynasty means it would speak to them.

Barcelona confident of signing Rodri

Paul Hirst

Barcelona are growing increasingly confident of signing Rodri from Manchester City and hope that the Spain captain could complete his move to the Nou Camp by the end of the week.

Talks between the two clubs continued yesterday, three days after City rejected Barcelona's initial offer of £38.5 million for the 30-year-old World Cup winner.

City are believed to be holding out for a fee of about £60 million and Barcelona are willing to meet that figure, although with a down payment of about £55 million, plus at least another £5 million in add-ons.

Barcelona would like to have Rodri through the door in the next few days so he can integrate himself into the squad. Barcelona play Basel in a friendly on Sunday, a week before they begin their Spanish title defence against Elche.

Ferran Torres, who scored the winning goal in the World Cup final against Argentina, was also due to return to training at Barcelona's base tomorrow, but it appears that the winger is set to move to Paris Saint-Germain. The French club are expected to make a second offer that is higher than their opening bid of £34 million, plus £8.5 million in add-ons.

Like Torres, Rodri has a year left on his contract and has not shown any desire to extend his deal, which is why City are ready to cash in on him.

City have already signed the England midfielder Elliot Anderson from Nottingham Forest for £116 million and are in talks with Lille over a potential £85 million deal for the 18-year-old Moroccan Ayyoub Bouaddi.

If Rodri leaves, Enzo Maresca may ask the City hierarchy to go back into the market for another midfielder, although they already have other players in that position, such as Mateo Kovacic, Tijjani Reijnders and Nico González.

Kovacic, who has one year left on his deal, has said he wants to stay at City, as has González, while Reijnders has been linked with a transfer to Forest.

West Ham may turn to Vardy, 39, if move for Parrott fails

Jamie Vardy is among the back-up options for West Ham United if they cannot sign Troy Parrott.

The 39-year-old striker wants to play on after leaving Cremonese when his contract expired following their relegation to Serie B. He scored seven goals and provided three assists.

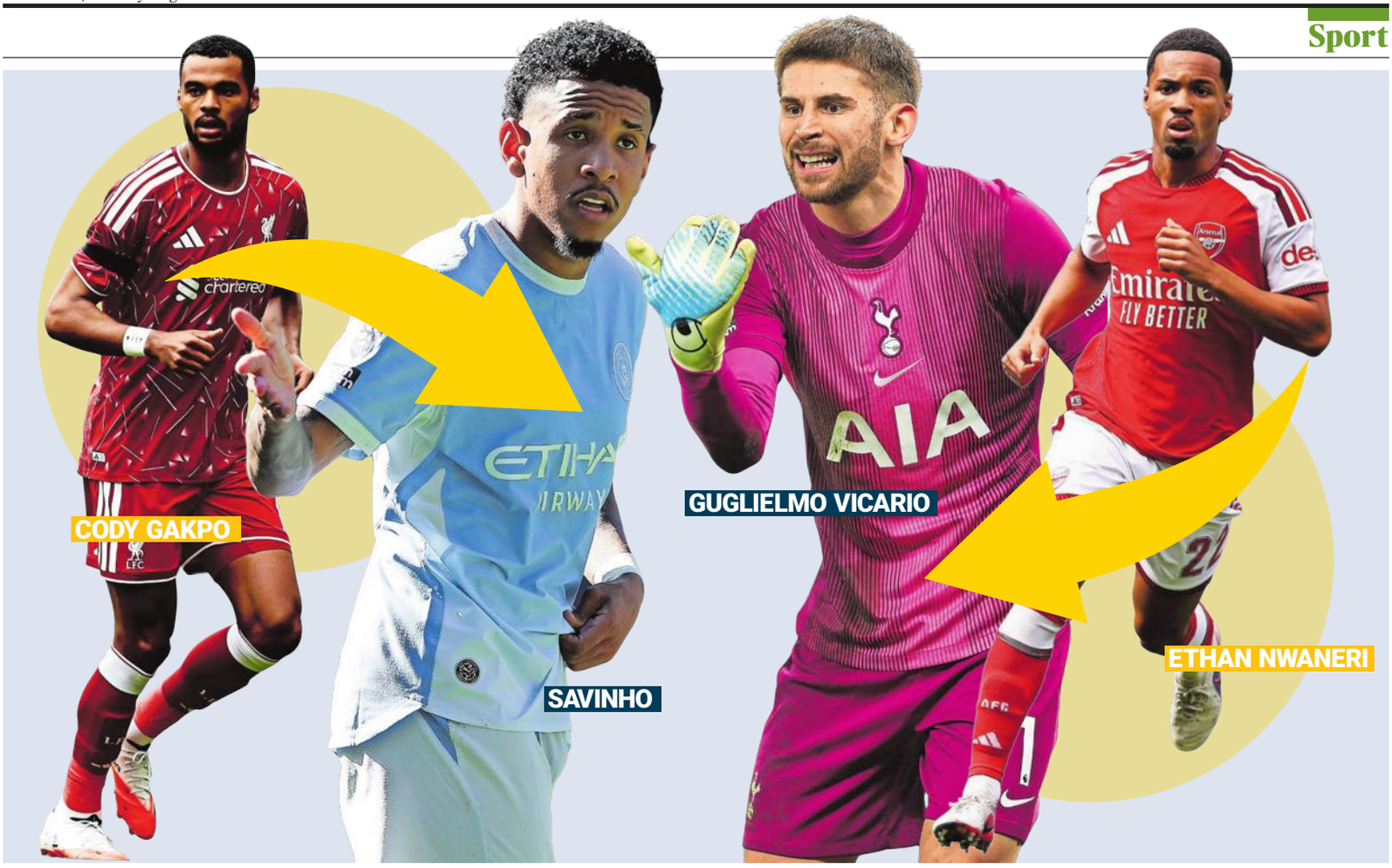
West Ham have had a bid of about £15 million rejected for Parrott, the Ireland forward who has scored 51 goals and provided 17 assists in 97 matches for AZ Alkmaar in two seasons. He moved for £6.7 million from Tottenham Hotspur, who have a 20 per cent sell-on clause, in 2024.

RB Leipzig also have an interest in Parrott. West Ham's other target has been Wilson Isidor, but Sunderland insist the forward is not leaving.

Manor Solomon has signed a three-year contract with West Ham after finalising a £7 million transfer from Tottenham. The winger, 27, contributed ten goals and 13 assists on loan at Leeds United to help them achieve promotion from the Championship in 2025.

Aston Villa's hopes of signing Endrick on loan from Real Madrid were fading last night. The Brazil forward, 20, spent the second half of last season on loan at the French side Lyon, where he scored five goals in 16 appearances — and Villa wanted to bring him to the Premier League.

However, it is understood the player and his agency have now been informed he is part of head coach José Mourinho's plans this season.



The six swap transfers I'd love to see

Mixing logic and fun, **James Gheerbrant** suggests exchange deals that would make perfect sense for Premier League clubs

On the vanishingly rare occasions that a swap transfer happens, such as the deal in which Crystal Palace and Everton have exchanged Dwight McNeil and Brennan Johnson, it makes you wonder why clubs don't do it more often. So many players are out of place or out of favour at their Premier League clubs, and with new Fifa rules clamping down on the practice of exiling players to "bomb squads", there is all the more incentive to give unwanted players a new home.

What if swap deals were more commonplace? Here, for a bit of fun, we have imagined a universe where they are, and come up with another six possible swap transfers involving the other Premier League clubs. Some are straight swaps, others are part exchanges involving a fee:

MATTHIJS DE LIGT TO CHELSEA, NICOLAS JACKSON TO MANCHESTER UNITED

Since Michael Carrick replaced Ruben Amorim, United have been transitioning from a squad built for a back three to one built for a back four; Chelsea, under Xabi Alonso, may be moving in the opposite direction. Centre back De Ligt therefore offers more to Chelsea than he does to United, and has the pedigree to be interesting to Alonso. United's squad has few obvious gaps but Nicolas Jackson, whom Chelsea are keen to sell, is a better striker than his reputation suggests and would be an upgrade on the departed Rasmus Højlund. Malo Gusto, another whom Chelsea are not wedded to keeping, would also be an option.

SAVINHO FROM MANCHESTER CITY TO TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR FOR £30M PLUS GUGLIELMO VICARIO

City are in urgent need of a back-up goalkeeper after the departure of James Trafford. With Enzo Maresca's compatriot Michele De Bernardin serving as City's head of goalkeeping, adding Italy's No 2 to Italy's No 1, Gianluigi Donnarumma, makes a lot of sense. Roberto De Zerbi is ready to move on from Vicario to Antonin Kinsky. The front three is clearly the area where Spurs need more quality, and Savinho, a long-term target, gives De Zerbi his "*bomba*". Wingers aged 22 cost more than 29-year-old 'keepers, so a fee changes hands too.

JACOB GREAVES TO BOURNEMOUTH, JUSTIN KLUIVERT TO IPSWICH TOWN

Greaves is a very good player and Ipswich letting him go would once have seemed unthinkable. But with club captain Dara O'Shea, new signings Issa Diop and Cedric Kipré, and youngster Charlie Hughes, who some rate as a bigger asset than Greaves, offering depth in central defence, he feels like a player they can afford to lose. It's usually goalscorers, not centre backs, who move the needle for promoted teams trying to stay up. Ipswich get a proven Premier League scorer in Kluivert, who has been squeezed out a bit by Rayan, Eli Junior Kroupi and Evanilson at Bournemouth. Bournemouth need a bit more centre-back depth and Greaves could be polished into a gem there.

ETHAN NWANERI TO LIVERPOOL, CODY GAKPO TO ARSENAL, SEASON-LOAN SWAP

Left wing feels like a spot where Arsenal could still stand to strengthen. Gabriel Martinelli scored one league goal last season, Leandro Trossard has gone and Vinícius Jr is out of the picture. Gakpo is no Vini, of course, but he chips in like Trossard and has the height Mikel Arteta values. After an underwhelming pre-season, Nwaneri's path to first-team minutes at Arsenal is hard to see. Liverpool have lots of left-sided attackers but desperately need a right-sided player; Nwaneri would fit the bill and add a jolt of excitement.

If Arsenal aren't ready to give up on Nwaneri yet, call it a season-long loan.

VIKTOR TORP TO BRENTFORD FROM COVENTRY CITY FOR £12M PLUS ETHAN PINNOCK

Victor Torp had ten goals and eight assists in the Championship last season, but Coventry are fairly well stocked in midfield, with Torp, Matt Grimes, Josh Eccles, Jack Rudoni and new signings Caleb Yirenkyi and Frank Onyeka competing for three places. Frank Lampard may see more value in adding an experienced Premier League pro to a centre-back group that has added Eintracht Frankfurt's Aurèle Amenda to second-tier stalwarts Bobby Thomas and Liam Kitching (all of them 26 or younger).

Denmark's Torp feels very Brentford and is just the sort of player they could take to the next level.

MATS WIEFFER TO SUNDERLAND, WILSON ISIDOR TO BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION

Sunderland's biggest squad need is youth and dynamism in the full-back positions: their first-choice left back, Reinildo Mandava, is 32; 34-year-old Thomas Meunier has arrived to play on the other side; Nordi Mukiele has evolved into more of a centre back and Régis le Bris may be keen to continue using Trai Hume as a winger.

Wieffer, 26, played right back for Brighton last season, but with Olympiacos's Costinha joining Ferdi Kadioglu, his opportunities in that position may be numbered. He'd make a lot of sense for Sunderland.

Brighton haven't replaced Danny Welbeck: Isidor would join a striker group which, with Evan Ferguson, Stefanos Tzimas and Charalampos Kostoulas, is looking a little green at present.

Palace truce with partner of McNeil

Paul Joyce

The Crystal Palace co-owner and chairman Steve Parish has moved to clear the air with the partner of Everton winger Dwight McNeil as a swap deal involving Brennan Johnson nears completion.

McNeil had been close to joining Palace on loan on deadline day in January — a deal that included an obligation to buy him permanently for £20 million — but the transfer collapsed late on, leaving McNeil to return to Everton. In a searing post, McNeil's girlfriend, Megan Sharpley, subsequently accused Palace of messing with McNeil's mental health and breaking promises.

She said Palace had gone from "everything to radio silence, no phone call, no communication" and that her partner had been "left brokenhearted with nothing but confusion" after being "toyed with until the final minute".

She added: "In football, why do we find it acceptable because these young men are on a lot of money and that's okay to mess and toy with their mental health and that it's just part of the job?"

Now Parish has spoken to Sharpley to smooth things over so the move for McNeil, 26 — with Johnson going to Everton — can advance. The players were having medicals yesterday at their prospective new clubs and four-year deals for both have been prepared.

The transfer is a straight exchange, which has raised eyebrows given Johnson, the Wales forward, moved to Palace from Tottenham Hotspur for £35 million only in January. He has struggled at Palace, failing to score in 26 appearances, and was an unused substitute in the Conference League final victory against Rayo Vallecano. Johnson had scored 18 goals in 51 appearances for Spurs in 2024-25.

Everton would also hold an interest in Palace right wingback Daniel Muñoz in the event of him being allowed to leave.

Hunt queen of Europe after

Matt Lawton

Chief Sports Correspondent, Alexander Stadium

Art history may be Amy Hunt's passion but the art of winning major championship medals is fast becoming this speedy young woman's speciality.

Here in Birmingham she delivered a performance that certainly deserved a larger audience than the 13,000 who showed up for the opening night of these championships, with Hunt following that World Championship silver in Tokyo last September, and the same prize at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow last month, with a first, glorious gold of her career. "It was definitely time for an upgrade," she said.

Hunt claimed the European 100m crown in style, further enhancing the "track goddess" reputation she likes to combine with her "academic badass" background as a Cambridge graduate.

"I don't know if I have any more one-liners in me," she then said after revealing her desire to add three more medals, in the two sprint relays and the 200m, before the week is out. "But as I mentioned in the press conference yesterday when I quoted one of my favourite Freddie Mercury lines, 'I want it all.'"

This was some start; a moment in sporting history that marked another outstanding display in an already impressive season; one in which she has dipped under 11 seconds for the first time while also beating Dina Asher-Smith, here as the defending champion but only good enough for fifth on this occasion, to the national title over the shorter sprint distance.

Hunt was quickest in the three semi-finals earlier in the evening, winning a heat that also included Asher-Smith, in an impressive 10.99sec.

But the 24-year-old dealt superbly with the pressure such expectation creates, even if she may well concede that she perhaps sat a little too long in the blocks.

What Hunt has long claimed, however, is terrific top-end speed and the latter part of the race that served her so well in Japan last year proved decisive on this occasion too.

Not until about 65 metres did Hunt finally get her nose in front, coming through to win in 11sec flat for a win that was as much about holding her nerve as the pace that propelled her beyond the reach of Poland's Ewa Swoboda.

"I can be incredibly self-critical," she said in reflecting on that slightly sluggish start. "I think my coach will probably say it was … 'trash' is probably going to be his word for it.

"But we came through at the end. I think that's one of my biggest skills in championships. I know I'm so strong towards the end. I always have that kind of extra magic in the last 40 or 50 metres."

She said that she had seen herself winning this one. "I'm so confident in myself because I get to see what I do every single day at training," she said. "So I knew I could come away with a gold. In fact I had such a big premonition, this magical feeling.

"I've won the English Schools here. I've raced here as a 13, 14-year-old. This really is my track. I'm a girl from Newark, a Midlands girl, so I just had a feeling that this was going to be my night."

Her victory marked the conclusion to a thrilling evening of track and field that also included a silver medal for Great Britain's 4x400m mixed relay quartet and a remarkable win for the irrepressible Jakob Ingebrigtsen in the men's 5,000m.

His latest triumph arrived in a fraction over 13min 15sec but after a 324-day absence from competition. "With 600 metres to go, I knew I was going to get that gold medal," he declared afterwards. Another one with an ability to predict the future.

Ingebrigtsen's journey through elite distance running has never been short of storylines that sit outside his extraordinary ability on the track, from the Truman Show existence of his more formative years to the courtroom drama that concluded last year with his father and former coach, Gjert, being convicted for assaulting his daughter.

But this appearance by the double Olympic champion boasted its own unique narrative, even if there was also a more familiar Ingebrigtsen-style twist.

An achilles issue that ruined his chances of yet more medal success at last summer's World Championships finally demanded surgery in January.

So to time his comeback for a European final certainly took some guts, especially when accompanying him on his 12.5-lap return to the track was an athlete now being guided by the estranged old man.

Ingebrigtsen has been here before. He went into the 2023 World Championships facing another Norwegian who had chosen to remain part of Gjert's training group when Jakob and his brothers had ditched him, with Narve Gilje Nordas very nearly pipping him to the silver medal in a 1,500m final won that year by Josh Kerr.

But for Gjert to continue coaching his son's rivals after receiving that 15-day suspended prison sentence, having also been acquitted of all charges relating to the allegations made by Jakob, is dark even by his standards.

José Carlos Pinto was very much a threat, even if he had something of an off night and dropped out halfway through the race.

But for 25-year-old Jakob, coming into this contest undefeated at a European Championships having won both the 1,500m and 5,000m titles at each of the last three editions, it must have been an unwelcome complication.

The race, however, was nothing short of a classic, and all the more impressive given the manner in which he claimed yet another European gold.

Ingebrigtsen prefers a fast pace but this was relatively slow, with the Norwegian sitting three from the back as they passed through 3,000 metres in 8:07.

When he did move to the front with 1,400 metres remaining he was unable to hold the position, reaching the bell in third and still in that position coming into the closing straight.

But from somewhere Ingebrigtsen rediscovered the speed that once propelled him to Olympic 1,500m glory, surging to the front with less than 50 metres remaining and putting more than three tenths of a second between himself and second-placed Florian Bremm, of Germany

"I dreamt of this moment two weeks ago when I put my name on the list and I was crossing my fingers that I would come here and feel better," Ingebrigtsen said after punching the air in celebration.

"It was just enough. I'm extremely happy."

European Championships

TV: Today, 10.30am-1.15pm on BBC1; 7pm-8pm on BBC2 and 8pm-10pm on BBC1

Hunt held her nerve to claim the European 100m title in Birmingham, winning in 11.00sec. The Briton, 24, who previously

Tokyo shock still follows Jacobs as he bids for treble

Matt Lawton

As well as a first sight of Keely Hodgkinson in a morning session in which she will launch her pursuit of a third consecutive European 800m title, day two of these championships here in Birmingham involves another athlete seeking treble glory.

Lamont Marcell Jacobs stunned athletics in 2021 when, having only recently converted from long jump to sprinting, he broke the ten-second barrier for the 100m and then claimed the Olympic title in Tokyo in what remains a European record of 9.80sec.

Within days a different narrative emerged. As The Times first reported, the nutritionist and gym owner celebrated for his role in the Italian's sprinter's transformation had been implicated in a Milan police investigation into the distribution of banned steroids.

While "Operation Muscle Bound" concluded with Giacomo Spazzini being acquitted in court of criminal charges, he did receive a 15-year anti-doping ban.

That, however, was then completely rescinded on appeal when an independent panel ruled that Spazzini fell outside the jurisdiction of anti-doping authorities because, technically, he was not a participant in sport.

Representatives acting for Jacobs were quick to insist their client terminated his relationship with Spazzini the moment he learnt of the police investigation — Jacobs, himself, is a serving police officer — a few months before the Tokyo Games.

But it is a story that has followed 31-year-old Jacobs as he has collected further titles, two of them coming in 2022 and 2024 with those European outdoor victories as well as a world indoor 60m gold he claimed some six months after Tokyo.

He managed only fifth in trying to defend his Olympic title in Paris two years ago, but this season Jacobs — now back with the same Italian coach who guided him to perhaps one of the most unexpected triumphs in the history of the sport — is looking sharp. He clocked an eyewatering 9.67sec in Austria last month, albeit with the assistance of a wind blowing at 4.1m/s.

It certainly makes him the favourite this evening, with Great Britain's Romell Glave probably his closest rival.

storming finish

MARTIN RICKETT/PA

came second in the 200m at last year's World Championships, said afterwards that "I was getting fed up with silver"

Infantino accused of deceit by world football's leaders

CONTINUED FROM BACK

with insiders saying it shows that the opposition to Infantino will not be intimidated. There is also strong confidence that Infantino would lose an election if he insisted on running, such is the breadth of opposition to him now.

Although some members of the AFC, such as Qatar, and Mexico from Concacaf, have backed Infantino, the majority are following their leaders. That includes the Caribbean Football Union, which has 25 Fifa members among the 35 in Concacaf. Uefa's 55 member associations are understood to be united.

Although the Confederation of African Football's executive has endorsed Infantino, some of its 54 member nations could also back a rival.

"This is about something more fundamental: the integrity of the game, and the integrity of those elected to lead it," the letter says.

"Leadership in football is not a possession. It is not about holding — or demanding — power to be held. It is a duty of service to the football family that entrusts it. When trust is broken through deception, when an individual places himself above the collective that entrusted him with authority, that duty has been abandoned."

The letter says that Fifa's admission of mistakes around Infantino's original scheme to sell stakes in Fifa tournaments to private investors was only around "a failure of communication" rather than an apology about the secret plan itself. It adds: "What football witnessed was a failure of judgment. A proposal advanced on a compressed timeline, without meaningful consultation, and pushed toward a deadline before member associations could properly review its terms is not the product of an oversight — it is the product of a design intended to limit scrutiny.

"It did not acknowledge that the proposal itself was inherently wrong. There remains no recognition that attempting to sell an interest in the Fifa World Cup was a profound failure of judgment — not just a procedural misstep, but a fundamental breach of trust with the very institutions Fifa exists to serve."

The letter says Fifa's promised review of the collapse of the scheme should be carried out by a fully independent third party. It also questions why no Fifa Council members were invited to Infantino's crisis summit in Morocco last week, pointing out that Infantino was the only elected official to attend. The others were Fifa management — but without critical voices such as the chief operating officer, Kevin Lamour, or Arsène Wenger, the head of global football development.

"This recent meeting ... only reinforces these concerns and represents a continuation of the very pattern of conduct that brought us to this moment," the letter adds. "It is not the conduct of a custodian of the game, but of one who believes the game is answerable to him. There is silence where there should be accountability, distance where there should be openness.

"These are not the qualities football deserves in its leadership. That is why we have taken this stance: not lightly and not alone, but together, and out of duty to the game we serve. Football's strength has always been its unity. We call for that unity to be honoured now, for leadership that serves football, not seeks to command it."

The biggest factor against Infantino resigning is that the Fifa presidency has become his identity over the last ten years. Without the position he would be giving up the lifestyle and profile that he cherishes — flying on private jets and mingling with world leaders and celebrities. His salary and bonuses of $6 million (£4.4 million) a year would also be difficult to match if he left with his reputation in tatters. Sources with knowledge of the sell-off scheme said that the idea was for Infantino to become commissioner of the new enterprise after stepping down as Fifa president on a salary of $30 million plus bonuses. Fifa said that had never been discussed.

Infantino is under fire over his sell-off scheme

Britain off to flyer in Paris with double relay gold

Swimming
Craig Lord Paris

Great Britain moved to the head of the leaderboard on the first day of the European Swimming Championships in Paris last night after the men's and women's 4x200m freestyle relay teams won gold, while Max Litchfield took bronze in the 400m individual medley.

There was more good news for the team as Adam Ramsay-Peaty raised hopes of a revival that had looked to be in serious doubt just two weeks ago at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. He moved into the final of the 100m breaststroke with Filip Nowacki, 18, the heir-in-waiting to his British breaststroke crown, also making it through. The men's 4x200m freestyle relay team won in a time of 7min 01.52sec, which was 0.71sec ahead of France, with Germany a further 0.05sec away. Great Britain last won the European title in 2018, but since then three involved in that success — Tom Dean, James Guy and Duncan Scott — have, with Matt Richards, claimed gold at two Olympic Games (2021 and 2024) and two World Championships (2023 and 2025). In Paris, Dean raced a touch slower than his training partner, Jack McMillan, in the heats, and he replaced the Tokyo Olympic 200m freestyle champion in the final.

Scott, who had the edge on all the last-leg splits among the first four teams home, hung on for gold. With a smile, he said: "'Hung on' is probably the right word. The credit goes to James. He's 30 years old, no slowing up, and I think he really did put in that gap that I needed for the back leg. Phenomenal."

But Guy had none of it. "There's no 'I' in team," he said. "And the one thing we said before walking down is just do your part and try and get the best outcome possible."

Ramsay-Peaty looks impressive as he reaches the 100m breaststroke final

Meanwhile, Britain's quartet of Freya Colbert, Abbie Wood, Leah Schlosshan and Freya Anderson dominated their final, winning in a time of 7min 45.93sec ahead of Hungary and Neutral Athletes B. The swimming powerhouses of Australia, the US and China remain a distant target, but Colbert said: "It's all about that medal in LA 2028 ... we're in a much stronger place."

Earlier, there was a bronze medal for Litchfield in the 400m individual medley, while in the semi-finals of the men's 100m breaststroke, Ramsay-Peaty and team-mate Nowacki topped their line-up in faster times than those that won them Commonwealth bronze and silver respectively in Glasgow two weeks ago. Nowacki swam another lifetime best, of 59.03sec, while Peaty-Ramsay's 58.94 was just behind his other main opponent in the final today, Nicolo Martinenghi, the Italian who pipped the world record-holder by 0.02sec for the Olympic crown in Paris two years ago.

CONTINUED FROM BACK

Marinakis sues over gun banner

demonstrates that it was aware of the risk." Gibbs-White had come close to leaving Forest to join Tottenham last summer, but instead signed a new contract to stay at Forest.

Now Marinakis is seeking damages after filing a defamation claim against the club at the High Court yesterday. He will need to prove that the publication of the defamatory banner caused him serious harm and also that Palace were liable for the publication. Palace declined to comment.

The banner was produced at a time of heightened tensions between the two Premier League sides with Steve Parish, Palace's chairman, suggesting Forest had played a role in getting his side demoted from the Europa League to the Conference League. It was found Palace had breached Uefa rules on multi-club ownership and they were replaced in the Europa League by Forest.

Sport

The real Mourinho?

Alyson Rudd reviews Netflix documentary on manager

Page 47

Bezos group's £1.5bn stake in Liverpool

Paul Joyce
Northern Football Correspondent

Liverpool's owner Fenway Sports Group is poised to sell about one-third of the club to a consortium of billionaires, including the Amazon founder Jeff Bezos.

The syndicate is being led by Amit Bhatia, the son-in-law of steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal, and discussions are now at an advanced stage over the minority share.

As well as Bezos, Bhatia is being joined by Eduardo Saverin, one of the co-founders of Facebook, and a source said: "Talks are ongoing, but it is looking positive."

An announcement on the deal, which is worth £1.5 billion and would therefore value Liverpool at around £4.5 billion, is expected to follow over the next week and would mean the Anfield club have some of the wealthiest people in the world listed among their co-owners.

Despite the financial resources that Liverpool would appear to be able to tap into, the club would not suddenly be able to spend whatever they wanted to on new players in the transfer market, for example.

The Premier League's Squad Cost Ratio financial regulations limit the spending of top-flight clubs to 85 per cent of their football-related revenue and net profit/loss from player sales. In addition, those who play in European competition, as Liverpool invariably do, must fall in line with Uefa's 70 per cent cap. "They are not suddenly going to sign [Kylian] Mbappé," said a source.

Bhatia, whose father-in-law is worth an estimated £24 billion, last month stepped down from the board at Queens Park Rangers and transferred his stake in the club to owner Ruben Gnanalingam. He had been involved with the Championship club for 18 years.

Bezos's fortune is stated to be worth more than £207 billion by Forbes, and Saverin is said to be worth in excess of £24 billion.

Saverin was previously part of an unsuccessful consortium that tried to acquire Chelsea from former owner Roman Abramovich after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

In contrast, Bezos has not been interested in acquiring a stake in a sporting institution previously, having turned down the chance to purchase NFL side Seattle Seahawks.

Signing up now for a shareholding of about 30 per cent would demonstrate the consortium's backing for how FSG has run Liverpool on and off the pitch, given they would want a return on their investment. The deal also reflects the club's allure on the global stage.

One of the key benefits of the involvement of such high-profile figures would be driving off-pitch revenue through new commercial tie-ups, while there could also be infrastructure and tech opportunities. In the latest accounts for the financial year ending May 31, 2025, Liverpool announced record revenues of £703 million.

Deals with front-of-shirt sponsor Standard Chartered and sleeve sponsor Expedia both expire in the summer of

Continued on page 48

ALEX LIVESEY/BRITISH ATHLETICS/GETTY IMAGES

Hunt sprints to European gold

Fast-finishing Briton, 24, wins 100m in Birmingham — her first major title after silvers at both worlds and Commonwealths. Report, pages 50-51

Infantino 'has broken trust'

Martyn Ziegler
Sports News Reporter of the Year

Gianni Infantino has been accused of "deception" by three Fifa vice-presidents over his World Cup sell-off plan in a joint letter that raises the stakes over his future.

The open letter from Aleksander Ceferin, Victor Montagliani and Sheikh Salman Bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, respectively the presidents of Uefa, Concacaf and the Asian Football Confederation, says Infantino "abandoned" his duty and "broke trust".

The confederation leaders want Infantino to resign now and not seek re-election in March. Some sources said there have even been preliminary discussions about organising rival international competitions for their players.

The letter is in response to a furious statement from Fifa over the weekend,

Continued on page 51

Marinakis sues for gun banner

Charlotte Duncker

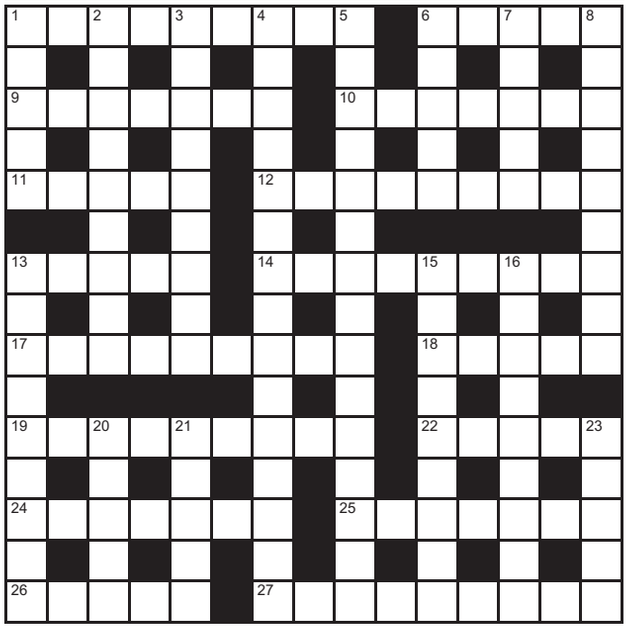
Nottingham Forest owner Evangelos Marinakis is suing Crystal Palace for defamation over a banner the London club's fans held up in August 2025 which depicted him holding a gun to midfielder Morgan Gibbs-White's head.

Palace were fined £50,000 by the Football Association over the banner, which read: "Mr Marinakis is not involved in blackmail, match-fixing, drug trafficking or corruption."

The FA deemed Palace had not done enough to stop their supporters behaving in an improper, offensive, abusive or provocative way during the 1-1 draw at Selhurst Park. The governing body said in a statement: "The fact that Crystal Palace had a policy to prevent banners being smuggled into the stadium

Continued on page 51

Times Crossword 29,618



ACROSS

1 Supporters' talk involving openings for youth team — what a surprise (5,4)
6 Bear with recurrent bad cough (5)
9 Recover two cities inside border (7)
10 Wrongly pick up circulating cash to clip (7)
11 Attracted by river in early light (5)
12 Goes for good record label with good prices (9)
13 Abdicate, not having succeeded in this? (5)
14 Where patient may be likely to lose guts after a week, in clumsy way (9)
17 Advanced with vigour and ripped dress open (7,2)
18 Half portion of pasta and cake (5)
19 Jaundiced, you will want to accept nothing (9)
22 Tight-lipped about son that creates a range of colours (5)
24 Illustrations of couple beginning to relax in boat (7)
25 Polymers holding last of rotting steps down (7)
26 Fail to recruit team for Union opponents (5)
27 Gloomy yet surprisingly wordy study? (9)

DOWN

1 Passenger, first to depart, got on (5)
2 Fruit tree can supply nursing home (9)
3 Agreed to accept caution, leaving with very strong feelings (9)
4 Flag device from horror studio with stomach-turning real gore at the end (6,3,6)
5 Eliot, Cromwell, as well as Hotspur: no one exceptional? (3,4,3,5)
6 More sensible of Scrooge for one to flip character at the start (5)
7 Observable, with the passage of time (5)
8 Colonnade steeply raked: I run up through it (9)
13 Salesman daily travelling around quietly free to return (5-4)
15 A new suggestion regarding first course (9)
16 For heroic deeds, Wagner's operas satisfy (7-2)
20 Source of rubber in recent times (5)
21 Recombine elements of very lightweight gas (5)
23 Has to finish off pastry smelling stale (5)

Yesterday's solution 29,617

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TIMES 2

August 11 | **2026**

Must they?

The summer of the PDA*

***Public display of affection**

Clockwise from main: Victoria and David Beckham; Sam and Aaron Taylor-Johnson; Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce; the Princess and Prince of Wales

Brad Pitt has opened up about suicidal thoughts. I'm not sure he's helping

GETTY IMAGES

Robert Crampton

Discussing the pain, still continuing, of his break-up with Angelina Jolie a decade ago, Brad Pitt told an Esquire interviewer: "I've never been suicidal except for one little period. And in that one little period, I just thought — I just couldn't — just didn't see a way out. The pain was so oppressive that — I wasn't going to act on this, but I could feel — I could feel the cold steel of the bullet in my head, and it felt like relief."

That is quite a revelation, especially coming from a guy who, by his own no-false-modesty admission, "won the lottery". Global fame, talent, stellar good looks and considerable wealth provide no guarantee of happiness, not when you're estranged from at least three of your six kids and they announce, one after another, that they're dropping your contribution to their surname. That's gotta hurt.

To be clear, Brad isn't saying he was suicidal. But he did succumb to an ideation of self-destruction (the cold steel bullet). Suicide is the biggest killer of men under 50 in the UK, although the rate is highest among men aged 50-54, roughly Brad's vintage, I think, at the time of his darkest thoughts. Fourteen men die by their own hand every day in the UK. That's 5,110 a year. It's a grim, grisly subject. What to make of the superstar's intervention? Is it likely to increase these shocking numbers, or reduce them? I'm conflicted.

The received wisdom says yes, of course we should be open about our mental health. Destigmatisation is good. Talking is good. Sharing is good. Celebrities such as Pitt, Prince Harry and Stormzy opening up about their struggles encourage other, non-famous men to face their demons and seek solutions. To get on antidepressants, or into therapy, before they harm themselves or others. If Pitt can feel so beaten down by life, the argument goes, the guy in the street is buoyed by learning he is not alone.

And yet when the talk turns away from solace and survival to self-destruction, I wonder if candour is always a good option. Suicide is anything but a relief to the loved ones left behind. For them it's a life sentence.

Pitt's father is alive, and he has a brother and sister, nieces and nephews, friends and fans. And children — they're angry with him at the moment, but he's still their dad. If you even so much as float the idea of suicide, even to say you personally merely imagined it rather than contemplated it, you had best explain how you set about withdrawing from the brink.

If celebrities do have influence, as is assumed, Pitt going on record with his self-administered "cold steel bullet in my head" daymare is perhaps not entirely wise. Somewhere some poor soul who very much did not win the lottery, whose life feels a lot like the opposite of a lucky jackpot, may get the wrong idea.

As Pitt says of the protracted agony he felt as his erstwhile happy family fell spectacularly apart, "This shit ain't easy." I'm sure he'd be the first to admit it's even less easy when you don't have all the advantages that were bestowed on him.

Chuck, the Hoover sucks

Chuck Grassley, the bracingly reactionary 92-year-old Republican senator for Iowa, has announced the "passing" of his beloved Hoover. The device, which Grassley calls Beth and frequently references on social media, has sucked its last, aged 49, on account of giving out "electrical sparks". To which I say: Chuck, you bottler, so what?

My great-aunt Adele used her 1949 Hoover 0307 washing machine well into the 1980s. For the last decade or so she had to do the weekly wash wearing rubber gloves to prevent electrocution. When she tentatively suggested getting a replacement her husband, Uncle George, harumphed, "I didn't realise I'd married a spendthrift," and sulked for days. Not a generous man, Uncle George.

Upgrades are, of course, sometimes necessary. And sometimes they're not. I have an exceptionally bog-standard turn-of-the-century Ryohin Keikaku desk calculator. It's way superior to the one on my phone. For one thing, it doesn't get stroppy and stomp off back to the screensaver if I ignore it for 15 seconds.

Marler's modesty is engaging

Good luck to Joe Marler as he takes on his new role in *Gladiators*. I've interviewed Joe three times, most recently after his show-stealing stint on *Celebrity Traitors*, and can confirm he's a lovely guy. A big part of the big man's appeal, however, is his extreme modesty, the lacerating self-mockery beloved of most Englishmen in general and rugby players in particular. I hope he gets a chance to display this trait on telly, but I worry *Gladiators* isn't big on irony and self-deprecation.

As we saw on *Traitors*, Joe's one smart guy, his emotional intelligence and clear-eyed reasoning far superior to those shown by supposedly more intellectual men such as Stephen Fry and David Olusoga. Sadly, *Gladiators* doesn't go a bundle on brains any more than it does humility. I hope he's getting paid a lot.

Eew! Enough

A new study has found that couples who canoodle in public are happier together. Spare us, says Shane Watson

We all know the rules of PDA. Some people are keen, others (normal, considerate people) are not, and those of us who don't go in for it are suspicious of public displays of affection.

To be more specific, we're fine with PDA providing it occurs within a smallish window — for example, the early days of dating, wedding and honeymoon — and the young are obviously an exception. What creeps us out is the couple who can't keep their hands off each other, particularly if they're over 30, especially if they've known each other for more than six months.

It's not that we're prudish (well, we never ever want to see your tongues, thanks, and, thinking about it, hands must be still, not wandering up and down or, God forbid, gently squeezing), it's more that we distrust the motives of the PDA happy couple and feel in our gut that affection is not what they're displaying so much as insecurity, self-love or both.

They're not passionate about each other, they're in love with the idea of being in love and someone being in love with them. PDA is performative as much as it's public, and it has nothing to do with genuine love or affection or lust. It's the protesting too much that gives the game away. The determination to show the world what only you two need to know.

Until this week I would have said this was a behavioural fact you could back up with research done on chimps. But now here comes the result of a scientific study, published in the journal Plos One, that suggests the opposite.

Researchers asked people to rate how frequently they engaged in various public displays of affection, including holding hands, hugging and kissing, and declaring their love for each other in front of family and friends, and found that people who engage in more PDA have "greater relationship satisfaction". Even small public gestures such as "holding hands, hugging or kissing can help partners feel valued, emotionally secure and connected to each other", they concluded.

Still, we're not going to take this lying down. It's one thing Callum Turner giving Dua Lipa a kiss on the temple when they're lined up in front of the cameras at his premiere: this couple are just married, they're in front of the world's press, they're having fun, living the life. This counts as a genuine gesture of affection — including Turner's consideration for Lipa's pristine make-up.

Adam Ramsay-Peaty and Holly

Likewise, when Mr Sienna Miller leans in for a proper kiss in the crowd on Centre Court at Wimbledon we don't doubt his motives for a minute, ditto Aaron Taylor-Johnson and his wife, Sam. There are these exceptions to the "no PDA, we're British" rule, but the fact remains that the majority of PDA is on a spectrum from mildly ick-making to very exposing.

Let's turn to some of the most prolific celebrity PDAers, starting with Brooklyn and Nicola Peltz-Beckham.

> "Handsiness is bad — especially the slow-moving bum stroke

In almost every image of these two he is kissing her while she smiles directly at the camera.

They are little clips of his devotion to her, posted for all the world to see, but he could just as easily be dressed in a waiter's livery passing her a plate of macarons or wielding a make-up brush; he's in service, never, or very rarely, on the receiving end of a kiss.

This is Don't You See Why He Adores Me PDA territory, and when the pictures aren't being posted the messages and affirmations are endless. These PDAs are no more genuine signs of affection than the pout and victory v sign is.

Then there's Harry and Meghan — more equally balanced PDAs, certainly, but no less staged for our benefit and calculated to enhance their love rep. Why was it necessary for Harry to film Meghan receiving a present of a sculpture of two intertwined penguins for their eighth wedding anniversary in May — with explanation (supposedly for the

with the performative PDAs

COVER: GETTY IMAGES; BELOW: REUTERS; SPLASH NEWS; GETTY IMAGES

Dua Lipa and Callum Turner

Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck

Taika Waititi and Rita Ora

Necking, licking, biting, snogging. Quick, call the Makeout Police

by Simon Mills

Have you heard about the latest, highly specialised division of the worldwide constabulary? It's mainly a covert and plain-clothed operation, mainly staffed by members of the general public, special officers and citizens being the secret weapon of this crack squad's all-seeing MO.

Yes, the Makeout Police (as reported in the latest edition of the Atlantic magazine) are everywhere — on the street, at sporting events, on beaches, in bars and clubs, on trains and planes, in parks and cinemas — and they like *to watch*. For a while, anyway.

Any couple with the erotic temerity to go "too far", for too long — necking, pecking, licking, biting, snogging, "feeling up", bumping, grinding, winding on one another etc — will be clocked by the Makeout Police and dealt with accordingly. A cry of "Get a room!" may be deployed as a warning shot, but should an overamorous pair continue, they will be dealt with and punished accordingly — viral shame, social media castigation, accusations of child abuse ("There are kids around!") and food poisoning ("I'm trying to eat here!") and, very possibly, total professional implosion swiftly following the misdemeanour.

Just look at the two lawyers over in Manhattan recently caught kissing on a bench in Central Park, he 45, she 29. Their bland U-certificate lunchtime "kissyface" video went viral on TikTok. "Completely inappropriate on so many levels," one New Yorker told the New York Post (he looked about 20 years old). "My dad's a lawyer and if I ever caught him doing that I would kill him," another girl said.

The really shocking thing about all this is how much modern PDA outrage is driven by apparently very outraged, very *young* people. Teenagers and twentysomethings who may well be happy with PDAing as entertainment on shows such as *Love Island* are *absolutely disgusted* by canoodling right in front of them.

How did we all get to be so picky, party-pooping and prudish? When I was a teenager in the Seventies, snogging one's "new bird" *en plein air,* in front of one's pals, was considered a sweet, open display of belonging, a show of mutual desire for one another.

On their bedroom walls young girls had poster prints of Robert Doisneau's famous 1950 *Le Baiser de l'hôtel de ville* and Alfred Eisenstaedt's highly charged image of a sailor kissing a nurse in Times Square on August 14, 1945, during the celebration to mark VJ Day. In the 1990s, at raves and house music nights, couples high on the PDA effects of MDMA would neck to four-on-the-floor Chicago beats as if their lives depended on it. PDAing was free, glorious, celebratory, harmless, naughty and nice.

Then came hyper-conservatism and the Southern Baptists' True Love Waits movement that encouraged teenagers and young adults to sign pledge cards promising sexual abstinence. Come the millennium, even more priggishness; incels, generation Z's Puriteen subdivision (puriteen being a portmanteau of puritan and teenager), the rise of Dubai as the world's most strictly platonic holiday resort (in 2010 two Britons were jailed in Dubai for kissing in a restaurant).

The most recent ground-zero PDA incident? The notorious Coldplay kiss cam moment in 2025, when the then Astronomer co-workers Andy Byron and Kristin Cabot were caught illicitly canoodling on the Gillette Stadium's jumbotron screen in Boston. The Makeout Police went into riot-level overdrive when this story broke. Cabot received as many as 600 unsolicited phone calls a day and about 60 death threats. She was labelled a slut and a home-wrecker and had to quit her job. Byron tendered his resignation too.

The Gillette Stadium and the Central Park couples' true crimes? Not merely being Coldplay fans or lawyers, nor their extramarital canoodling (Nathaniel Cullerton, one of the lawyers, and Byron were married at their respective PDA flashpoints) but perhaps a much more heinous felony: publicly canoodling in middle age — while being *not that hot*.

A man like me, in his sixties and way beyond any kind of hotness, is well aware of this cruelly discriminating factor. Yes, I might instigate holding hands on a walk, let an affectionate elbow hang off a bare shoulder in the park for a few strides. Perhaps cradle both arms from behind at a standing concert. That's about it. There will be no tongues, no groping, no neck-kissing or lobe-sucking. No one wants to see that.

So, old and unattractive people: no more kissing in the park. Enough already. *Get a room.* A really dull and unsexy hotel, with a nice trouser press and coffee-making facilities preferably.

children's benefit) of the cute reason behind it (penguins mate for life) and a picture of them at their engagement party wearing penguin onesies?

Hands up how many of us remember being summoned as children to look at our parents' anniversary cards and mutual gifts and rejoice in their love for each other? (I was literally never aware of my parents' anniversary, and they were married for 70 years.)

So do we conclude from this that Meghan and Harry are a) more in love than most couples could possibly imagine, or b) they want to be a couple whose love the world is invested in — and Harry knows he has to keep stepping up with the tokens and surprises and public acts of appreciation because private does not really cut it with Meg?

Then, new to the club are Adam Ramsay-Peaty and his wife, Holly, who was watching in the crowd at the recent Commonwealth Games and whose pregnant stomach he kissed every time he completed a race. Once was fine — they are, after all, newly married — then it became weird and about something else. The more cornered a couple are (his treatment of his estranged mother has been an issue lately), the more the PDA steps up, the more we feel slightly uncomfortable.

Handsiness is bad — especially the slow-moving bum stroke. Full-on kissing with chewing motions is bad — and even worse when you're at a family event (talking about that time JLo and Ben Affleck were photographed at a wedding, with their children present, working up to "get a room" state).

Even hand-holding when you're not strolling on holiday or forcing your way through a crowd (eg in a room at a social event) is definitely ick. But the calculated-for-the-benefit-of-others demonstration of love, however well intentioned, is discomfiting in a different way.

Oh come on, you may be thinking. Some people are just more affectionate than others. But it's not true, is it, when you think about it? The most loving couples I know you rarely see PDAing in the physical sense.

They're much more likely to share a loving glance, or a plate of food, and the real test is they're frequently sharing a private joke and making each other double up with laughter. We all know King Charles and Camilla are madly in love, and it's not because he's in the habit of grabbing her bum in public.

Two more things worth noting — for those of us who don't like to have our world view challenged: none of the people surveyed in this study were from the UK. Just saying. Also, those surveyed who were in the habit of showing affection regularly *in private* had even higher relationship satisfaction. So, if you're a no-PDAer, don't change your habits now.

> **The really shocking thing is how much outrage is driven by young people**

health

Everything you need to know about medication in a heatwave

Dr Mark Porter

This week's heatwave has prompted more health alerts. I will spare you the usual advice — important though it is to stay cool and well hydrated — and focus instead on how high temperatures can affect your medication, and how the combination of hot weather and certain drugs can be bad for you.

Earlier in the summer the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) issued a warning that improperly stored medication exposed to high temperatures may not work as intended. Examples include insulin, aspirin, GTN tablets for angina, thyroxine for an underactive thyroid gland, adrenaline auto-injectors such as EpiPen for severe allergies and slimming jabs such as Mounjaro.

Their efficacy won't fall off a cliff after an hour, but the higher the temperature — and the longer the exposure — the greater the risk. Given the huge range of medicines it's hard to generalise, but most should be stored at temperatures below 25C, with some requiring cooler environments and even refrigeration. And temperatures in a medicine cabinet in a sunny bathroom, car glovebox or boot, or even a doctor's medical bag, often far exceed 25C in the conditions expected this week.

Although the heat-related deterioration of some medicines is obvious, such as clouding in insulin or a vinegary smell with aspirin, it's typically impossible to tell. So follow the storage instructions on the packet. If there are none, the drug is likely to be stable enough not to worry.

Conversely, heat can boost the effect of some medicines. Skin patches containing the opioid painkillers buprenorphine or fentanyl may release more of the drug into the body when the skin is warm, so hot weather, sunbathing, a long bath or even a hot-water bottle can lead to dangerous sedation and respiratory depression.

Another concern is how drugs affect your skin's reaction to the sun. Antibiotics, particularly tetracyclines such as doxycycline, used to treat chest infections, acne-type skin disorders, STIs, Lyme disease and to prevent malaria, can trigger photosensitivity leading to rashes. As can the over-the-counter herbal remedy for low mood, St John's wort, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories such as naproxen tablets and ketoprofen gel, the immunosuppressant methotrexate taken by some people with conditions such as psoriasis and arthritis, and thiazide "water tablets" such as bendroflumethiazide.

The rash in these cases is typically triggered by the UVA component of sunlight, so it is important to use a high SPF sunscreen that has a five-star UVA rating. And be careful driving or sitting in sunlight streaming through a window at home — unlike sunburning UVB rays, UVA can travel through glass.

Some medicines can hinder our cooling mechanisms by reducing sweating. Common examples include anticholinergic drugs such as the bladder pills oxybutynin and solifenacin, as well as the old-fashioned antidepressant amitriptyline, often taken these days to help with nerve pain.

One other concern worth mentioning is when people fall ill during a hot spell, typically with a bout of gastroenteritis on holiday or after eating undercooked chicken from a barbecue at home. Here the burden of heat-induced dehydration on top of fluid loss through diarrhoea and vomiting can cause issues in people on some types of medication such as blood pressure and diabetes pills (see panel).

Some diabetes medicines can exacerbate existing dehydration or lead to dangerous acid build-up in the blood. Blood pressure pills can promote excessive salt and water loss — the last thing you need when dehydrated — and impair kidney function. While anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen and naproxen can, in extreme cases, cause kidney failure.

Prescribers are generally very aware of these risks — although there's a debate about how big a threat they pose — but don't seem to be that good at passing the relevant information on. Put simply, if you're on one of the drugs listed in the panel, you should consider stopping them while you're unwell. And, ideally, anyone affected will have been given a "sick day" medication card by their prescriber or pharmacist outlining what to do.

The card used by Healthcare Improvement Scotland is a typical example. It lists the drugs that can cause problems on sick days, and advises people who are unwell with two or more episodes of diarrhoea or vomiting and/or a high temperature, sweats or shaking to temporarily stop the relevant medication and to restart it only when they feel well, usually after 24-48 hours of eating and drinking normally. If you are not back to normal in 72 hours contact your doctor for advice. You can download all the information at healthcareimprovement scotland.scot.

All the above can be boiled down to three key messages: store your medicines properly, take extra care in the sun if on a medicine that can cause photosensitivity, and download "sick day" advice. Oh, and don't forget to restart anything you stop.

You can download the MHRA warning about improper storage of medicines at gov.uk/government/news/dont-let-this-heatwave-affect-your-medicines-three-important-tips-from-the-mhra

Drugs to avoid on sick days

Advice varies but I would include the following, unless advised otherwise by your GP or specialist:

- **ACE inhibitors and ARBs used to treat high blood pressure and some heart problems. Names end in -pril or -sartan, such as lisinopril, ramipril, candesartan and losartan.**
- **Entresto: used to treat heart issues.**
- **NSAIDs: anti-inflammatory painkillers such as ibuprofen, naproxen and diclofenac.**
- **Diuretics: water tablets used to lower blood pressure and remove excess fluid such as furosemide, spironolactone, eplerenone and bendroflumethiazide.**
- **SGLT-2 inhibitors used in diabetes, kidney and heart conditions. Names end in -flozin, such as dapagliflozin, empagliflozin and canagliflozin.**
- **Diabetes medicines such as metformin, the GLP-1 agonists (also used in weight loss) tirzepatide (Mounjaro), semaglutide (Ozempic/Wegovy) and liraglutide (Victoza).**

NHS
Providing NHS services
Boots
PrescriptionsPlus
Switch your prescription in
3 EASY STEPS
1 Scan the QR code
2 Click 'Continue to NHS Login' button
3 Login to our free online service
Scan to switch your prescriptions to Boots
★★★★½
in store | boots.com | app
Available for patients at participating GP surgeries. Subject to availability. Prescription charges may apply. See boots.com for full terms and conditions. **Rating from boots.com, average rating 4.5 captured 9 December 2025.
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Oh no, not the lettuce! Why the microbiologist won't eat salad

A recent outbreak of cyclosporiasis in America caused by leaves should be a warning to us all. By Peta Bee

GETTY IMAGES

I am a lifelong salad-lover, but I'm seriously considering going cold turkey on summer leaves. Iceberg lettuce was the trigger for me. This summer, as many as 22,000 people in America have been stricken by cyclosporiasis, a parasitic illness that can cause extreme gastrointestinal symptoms including vomiting and diarrhoea "with frequent and sometimes explosive bowel movements", according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Although it's notoriously hard to trace, not least because symptoms can take two weeks to occur, the US Food and Drug Administration identified a culprit: lettuce imported from a Mexican farm complex.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has warned of a sharp rise of cyclospora infections among travellers returning from Mexico and noted cases related to travel from the US and Kenya. And while cyclosporiasis — spread in food and water contaminated with human faeces — isn't endemic in Europe, our salads are far from risk-free.

Last year the UKHSA reported a 26 per cent rise in shiga toxin-producing E coli (STEC strain O145) infections in England. Symptoms can include diarrhoea, stomach cramps, vomiting and fever. Dr Gauri Godbole, the deputy director of gastrointestinal infections at UKHSA, said the agency had seen cases "gradually increase since 2022" but that the sharp rise was the result of a foodborne outbreak. It infected about 250 people, 86 of whom were admitted to hospital. The cause? Lettuce in packaged sandwiches they had eaten.

Having spent more than a decade researching the unsavoury things that lurk inside salad leaves, Dr Primrose Freestone, an associate professor of clinical microbiology at the University of Leicester, says she won't eat lettuce and "wouldn't touch a bagged salad in a million years".

The problem is that they are eaten raw, she explains. "There's a natural microflora on lettuce and leaves as they have been growing out in the wild. Heat destroys pathogens, and there's a risk in eating something from the ground that has not been cooked.

"There are so many opportunities in the way salads are grown and handled that allow for infection to jump in. Flies, wasps and other critters carry contamination, adding to the issue at this time of year. They can all carry pathogenic bacteria, including E coli, salmonella and listeria, onto fresh produce. Salad, lettuce and side salad infections can kill."

> **Pathogens grow more than 1,000 times better in a salad bag, even if it's kept in the fridge**

From 2020-21 microbiologists analysed 604 samples of fresh produce — mostly salad or salad leaves mixed with other vegetables — sold to UK shops and restaurants, and found listeria in 11 samples. One packaged salad containing leaves, cucumber and tomato was categorised as "potentially injurious" because traces of STEC were detected inside the bag. Sandwiches, salads and wraps served in UK hospitals were linked to a 2019 listeria outbreak in which six people were diagnosed as seriously ill and one died.

Before that, an outbreak of E coli O157 was traced to rocket leaves possibly imported from the Mediterranean and used in salad bags, including those supplied to restaurants. Of the 161 people affected, 62 needed hospital care and two patients died.

Salads can be delicious and nutritious, Freestone says, but we really need to eat them with caution. "There's a risk of cross-contamination in ready-made salads and salad bars at restaurants," she says. "If you prepare at home and follow good hygiene rules you can reduce food-borne infections, but don't overlook the potential risks."

Here's how to eat salad leaves safely.

Wash all salad ingredients (even those marked washed)

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) advises removing loose soil before storing vegetables and washing all herbs and salads thoroughly before eating. It's easier to remove pathogens from salad ingredients that can be peeled or scrubbed, Freestone says, but she still advises washing everything before consuming.

This includes bagged salad marked washed. "Using tap water is fine as it is clean and provides enough of a shear force to remove debris," she says. "But lettuce has too much of a large surface area and you shouldn't expect to get rid of everything lurking in leaves." Ultimately, though, if pathogens are internalised in leaves you can't wash them away. "You can reduce the risk but can't eliminate it," Freestone says.

Avoid bagged salads

Freestone's research shows that the moist environment in a bag of washed salad provides the perfect breeding ground for bacteria, including salmonella, which increased 2,400-fold in laboratory trials.

"Pathogens grow more than 1,000 times better in a salad bag, even if it's kept in the fridge, and they attach themselves to the plastic too," she says. The longer they are in there, the worse it becomes. "We found that germs use juices from bagged salad leaves to become more virulent. And that means they are more likely to cause an infection."

If you still choose to buy bagged salads, refrigerate them immediately, wash them before use and eat them as soon as you can.

Don't buy mixed-leaf salad bags containing spinach

These are the worst offenders. "If it makes Popeye strong, it makes pathogens strong," Freestone says. Even though commercial processors wash leaves in chlorinated water, bacteria can penetrate the cut edges of spinach leaves where washes cannot reach.

Furthermore, an analysis in 2022 by Pesticide Action Network UK found that spinach containing multiple pesticide residues increased from 57 per cent in 2019 to 73 per cent in 2022.

Ditch salad with slimy leaves

"Store a whole lettuce in your salad drawer for up to a week," Freestone says. "With bagged or pre-prepared salads, check the use-by date." You should definitely discard salad leaves that show signs of spoilage, such as "off" odours, sliminess or discolouration. "Dark green and moist leaves means microbial or fungal action on plant cells is leaching out fluids from interiors of cells," Freestone says. "In other words, your lettuce is starting to rot and you really need to chuck it out."

Skip restaurant side salads

In February my partner and some friends suffered food poisoning on a ski trip to France. The one thing we had all eaten that day was a limp side salad at a restaurant.

"Side salads are notoriously risky," Freestone says. "People always think it's the meat, fish or eggs they are served with but it's usually the side salad that causes the problems."

We never know their origin or how long they have sat out; perishable food left uncovered at room temperature for two hours is unsafe. "They really are best avoided when eating out," she adds.

Don't believe organic is safe

Buying organic will cut exposure to many agricultural chemicals but will not necessarily reduce your intake of PFAs, substances that are dubbed "forever chemicals" because of their ability to remain in and around our bodies for years.

A 2023 comparison of fresh, frozen and ready-to-eat vegetables showed that while organic produce may have lower levels of PFAs, it is not completely free from them. In 2022 the Expert Committee on Pesticide Residues in Food for PFA and pesticide residues found 7 per cent of 97 lettuce samples to contain traces of the chemicals, which can't be washed off.

It's not just salad leaves

When issuing its annual barbecue season warning about undercooked sausages and burgers the FSA advised that "extra care" be taken with "prepared salads such as rice salad, potato salad and coleslaw, as these carry the highest risk if they warm up".

Freestone generally eats coleslaw only from supermarkets because it has usually been pasteurised to remove pathogens. "I don't eat homemade coleslaw any more unless it is absolutely fresh and you are eating it straight away. Cabbage and carrots are safer when cooked, and leaving coleslaw outside next to the barbecue is asking for trouble."

The A-list plus one? It's a private

Nicole Kidman has just been spotted with a finance bro, and Olivia Rodrigo has too. Beware PE men says Helen Kirwan-Taylor

Michael Reinstein and Nicole Kidman

Oliver Haarmann and Reese Witherspoon

How to nab a Hollywood A-list actress? Invest in a Loro Piana gilet and a Patek Philippe watch for starters. Then, just as the espresso arrives, mention that you happen to own a private equity firm. If she looks blank tell her to look up Stephen Schwarzman (the co-founder of Blackstone, who on a good year earns a billion). Say, "I do that."

PE guys, as they are called, are this summer's most fashionable dating choice. Nicole Kidman was recently spotted in Portofino with Michael Reinstein, the founder of Regent, a Beverly Hills private equity firm. She's not the only celebrity to go doe-eyed for a finance bro. Reese Witherspoon is on her second PE guy, dating Oliver Haarmann of Searchlight Capital Partners. Also joining the club is the singer-songwriter Olivia Rodrigo, who has been spotted with Julian Croonenberghs, a private equity investor with Hg Capital. The Wall Street Journal has declared that a PE boyfriend is "the summer's hottest arm candy".

Gone are the tech bros, who evaporated as quickly as their baseball caps. Never was a great fortune born in a meditation pod. Most of those who slept in them are now unemployed.

It transpires that 26-year-old Megan Boni, aka @girl_on_couch, author of the TikTok diddle, "I'm looking for a man in finance. Trust fund. 6'5". Blue eyes..." was onto something. After the tech bros moved back in with their parents a replacement was necessary. Re-enter the banker.

Boni's lyrics, picked up and remixed by numerous DJs, eventually led to flash mobs performing in white shirts, gilets and black trousers, making the uniform an instant meme. Then came the ridicule accounts, such as Johnny Hilbrant Partridge's, with skits about "wealth flexing" and "status peacocking". The comedian originally set out to impersonate the dull finance men you meet at weddings and discovered he had nailed the industry (finesse not being part of it).

Banking is back in fashion. It re-emerged from its conservative and sleepy exterior in the Eighties, when new channels opened up for instant wealth creation. It was always bankers who closed down nightclubs in my day in New York: they were like extreme athletes except they carried briefcases.

I married one. The reason so few millennials want to go into finance today (and therefore are fêted like war heroes when they do) is because it's extremely competitive and hard work. No one pays you a bonus for self-actualising. I know a young banker whose supervisor monitors the time of his bathroom breaks — that's how much blood the clients expect.

To the outside world finance all looks the same, but where banking (I generalise) is about advising and hedge funds about investing, private equity is about sniffing out companies then raising money to acquire and take them over whether they like it or not. Then the big idea is to improve them by restructuring and refinancing (relying heavily on leverage) before selling them for a huge profit (or taking them apart, ie asset-stripping, which is the bit one hears less about).

The little I do know about PE is because of late-night, wine-induced tearful conversations.

A few successful people I have interviewed in the design industry were courted heavily. Like me they were nursery school-level educated when it comes to money, so it all sounded marvellous. They sold up for a fortune to help to "grow" the company, then they watched it be dismantled, get deep into debt and lose sight of what it was meant to be. Imagine starting a bakery because you love sourdough then later discovering that the PE guy you sold out to in a Savile Row suit with an Aston Martin has cost-cut out the "wild yeast" (based on a true story). Meanwhile you signed a 200-page contract.

For all the fashion logos, fast cars and expensive real estate, PE guys are the bloodhounds of the finance world. Once they have their eye on the prize they don't willingly let go. "Private equity is the most competitive of all finance jobs," confirms a friend who works for a prestigious American investment group in New York. "These are the elites. They're hugely well educated and come out of schools like Harvard and Wharton."

> **When the PE guys divorce it's on a whole other level**

Where hedge funders often have mathematical skills, PE guys have charm, she continues.

"They have to court entrepreneurs. They're super-focused, perseverant and ruthless at the top end."

She calls those who make it "top dogs". Typically they are well educated across a broad range of subjects. This may explain why notoriously intelligent actresses such as Kidman and Witherspoon might seek out their company and vice versa. "Immensely successful people know what it takes. This makes them kindred spirits."

Not so often discussed is the downside of this world, recently depicted by Belle Burden in *Strangers: A Memoir of Marriage*. Though a lawyer and a descendant of the Vanderbilt family, she describes the mysterious world of finance that her ex-hedge-funder husband occupied, where she had little knowledge of what he did or, more importantly, what he earned *or* where he put it. The book has ripped through a whole tier of my friend group in the UK and the US because it turns out many finance wives don't ask questions either. When they do the answer is often complicated and confusing.

My friend in the investment company tells me that when the PE guys divorce it's on a whole other level. "They are often emotionally distanced and ruthless, so when that turns nasty it's brutal." Assets are hidden or reinvested: after all, their job is about restructuring.

Most of what Instagram depicts is PE guys engaged in leisure activities: big boats, five-star hotels and private jets. The truth is the toys (and long-legged blondes) are compensation for what they have sacrificed in the name of making money. PE guys never commit to dinners, holidays or school meetings. Behind every top Hollywood celebrity is a company that, you never know, might need some refinancing?

I suspect the operative word in these relationships is "dating" because everyone knows two top dogs in the same pack eventually have it out. It might make for a fascinating week of conversation on a superyacht, but I'm not expecting a wedding announcement.

equity guy

GETTY IMAGES; GOFF PHOTOS

Olivia Rodrigo and Julian Croonenberghs

Cringe, I'm with a hedge funder

Allegra Handelsman

'People in the office are really excited," my boyfriend shares at a dinner party, assembling a fish taco with ingredients delicately prepared by the host, a friend of mine with a speciality in hosting Mexican food nights. "It's the best thing to happen to us since that 'I'm looking for a guy in finance' song."

He's referring to the news that Olivia Rodrigo — the Disney star turned world-famous singer-songwriter, background music for Gen Z girl heartbreak, and unashamedly my Spotify top artist of 2021 — is dating a new man.

You may be wondering, is he a hot young nepo baby with a modelling contract and an upcoming show on Prime Video? No. He is, in fact, the private equity associate Julian Croonenberghs. To be specific, Croonenberghs studied at Brown University and is a former Goldman Sachs investment banking analyst who now works at Hg Capital.

Olivia and I have had a surprisingly similar dating history, both of us cycling through actors and older party boys in the music industry. Her second album, *Guts*, felt like home in a way that was all too familiar; the opening verse of *Get Him Back!* read like a page of my diary. Now she has joined me as... the creative girlfriend of a finance bro boyfriend? A line I never thought I'd write, and still cringe at.

My boyfriend works at a hedge fund (which, for the record, is not the same as private equity), and for privacy — but let's be honest, embarrassment — reasons he'll remain anonymous. I promise he's real. We've been dating for a little over a year now, just enough time to make me ahead of the trend and an experienced enough guinea pig to report back. This is real boots-on-the-ground journalism!

When we started dating I affectionately called him a "pick-me finance bro", because of course he wasn't like the other finance bros — money-obsessed, flashy, boisterous. He was different. He loved art and film, and collected niche food magazines. A line I repeated often while explaining my surprising shift in romantic type.

It's refreshing to be taken out to nice restaurants on dates and not have to wait until 11pm drinks on a Wednesday night to see the person I'm dating, a consequence of going out with creative men that I experienced.

Yes, while there is the cringey chinos and gilet-wearing stereotype, I, for one, am happy with my pick-me finance bro boyfriend. He thankfully doesn't own chinos, and although I've seen the odd gilet in his wardrobe he doesn't wear them in my company, which is good enough for me.

So even though I never saw myself as a finance-bro girlfriend, I get the appeal. And my boyfriend's professional life is completely foreign to me; we each learn about the other's industry with genuine interest, and I get an insight into a world I'd never seen. There's also something I really respect about how hard he works.

So now, when my friends come back from failed dates with creative directors who pretend to read feminist literature but claim they're too busy for a relationship, I find myself saying — sincerely and patronisingly: "Maybe date someone with a real job?"

Barbells and protein: I mocked men in the gym — now I am one

At 39, Adam Silverstein is lifting weights for the first time

I used to quietly mock gym bros. You know the type: shaker bottle in hand, Joe Rogan in their ears, unable to eat a yoghurt without checking how many grams of protein it contains. They spend half their lives at the gym and the other half talking about it. Keeping fit is perfectly sensible, of course. But making it your entire personality? That seemed a bit much. Then I injured my hip.

I developed a rare condition called transient osteoporosis, which caused me to lose bone density in my left hip. One minute I was walking around normally, the next I was on crutches for six months. Unhelpfully this happened to coincide with my husband, Austin, and I moving from London to Colorado. Nothing says "new life in America" quite like doing your first Walmart shop on a mobility scooter.

The physical side was frustrating enough, but mentally it was harder. I couldn't walk properly. I couldn't exercise. My left leg slowly became a thin shadow of its former self. Looking down at it was genuinely alarming. I'd never really thought about muscle before because I'd always just... had it. Suddenly half of mine had disappeared. So once my hip had healed, my physiotherapist suggested I work with a personal trainer called Ian to rebuild the strength I'd lost. Expensive, I thought. I was still trying to get my head around the American healthcare system, where the price is usually the last thing anyone tells you. But my leg was in such a state I decided it was worth it. Then Ian asked me a dangerous question.

"Do you just want to work on your hip," he said, "or your whole body?"

My hip obviously needed fixing, but while we're here... my skinny-fat paunch could probably do with a bit of attention. My arms wouldn't mind looking less like they belonged to a lanky teenager. Perhaps we could do something about the faint suggestion of man boobs I'd quietly accumulated over the years. At $75 a session I may as well get more than just one hip out of it.

Before I knew it, at the age of 39 I was lifting barbells and dumbbells for the first time. I couldn't believe this was me. Ian gave me a daily protein target of 130g. This, I assumed, was where I'd draw the line. I wasn't going to become one of those people.

I became one of those people.

I now have a kitchen cupboard devoted to protein powder. I have caught myself saying things such as, "I need another 30g before bed," and regularly find myself standing in the supermarket turning packets over to check the protein content. Eggs for breakfast. Shake after the gym. Chicken for lunch. Protein bar in the afternoon. Then whatever gets me to 130g by bedtime. Somewhere along the way I became the person I'd spent years rolling my eyes at.

These days I go to the gym on my own three times a week, and I look forward to it. My routine is simple: chest press, leg press, hip abductions, a few dumbbells, barbells and cable pulls. Nothing fancy. It took me about a month to figure out how half the machines worked. Whenever I got stuck I'd ask someone nearby and blame it on being British, which it turns out is an excellent excuse for almost anything. But I've realised the gym isn't nearly as showy as I'd imagined. It's quite a vulnerable place. Most people are there because they want to improve something about themselves, and I find that oddly reassuring.

RACHELLE REID

Adam Silverstein

Sure, there are still things I don't understand. People happily sit in the sauna wearing their gym clothes, their earbuds in, chatting on the phone as if they're waiting for a bus. But I'm an immigrant, so who am I to judge?

The biggest culture shock has been me. Six months after getting off crutches, my body fat has dropped by 9 per cent, I've gained about 10lb of muscle and, for the first time in my life, I'm starting to see the outline of my abs. More importantly, I feel better. Not just physically but mentally too.

I'd forgotten how good it feels simply to be capable. I can hike the Rocky Mountains without worrying about my hip. I sleep better. I have more energy. And I feel less guilty demolishing an In-N-Out burger afterwards.

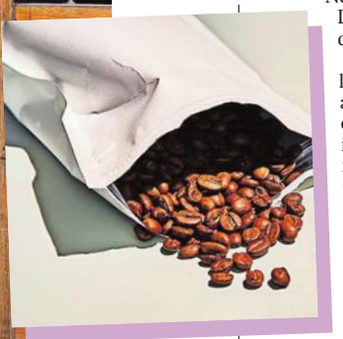
I think three gym sessions a week will do me. Austin may stage an intervention otherwise. Still, I never expected to enjoy working out quite so much. It turns out there was a gym bro lurking in me all along.

The PM wants to free me from subscriptions? They're not all bad

Andy Burnham plans to make it easier to cancel. Here's why I love some of my subs.

By Harriet Walker

CHRIS MCANDREW FOR THE TIMES; ALAMY



Harriet Walker

Paying for a streaming service you don't watch? Got behind on your daily gut health drink and now drowning in the stuff? Subscriptions used to be for niche publications and Girlguiding, but they are now so much a part of everyday life — digital and physical — that the global market is estimated to reach $1.5 trillion by 2033.

It isn't just Netflix, Spotify and Amazon Prime. There are subscriptions out there for organic condoms, puppy-training and piano lessons. Instagram urbanites no longer have a "milkman" but a "dairy subscription" — often with a side-order of sourdough. Another notes a baby's birth date and sends toys that take their development into account (£80 every two months, lovevery.co.uk).

Many of these are taking payment without people realising, having been lured in by free trials or overcomplicated online checkouts that then stealthily continue at a higher price. That's why Andy Burnham — no doubt as familiar with the exquisite rage of an "autorenew fail" as the rest of us — is turning his attention to "subscription traps" as part of a focus on the cost of living crisis. From January companies will have to provide more information upfront about subscription costs, as well as making it easier to cancel existing ones.

I'm a sucker for a sub. It began during the first wave of the cost of living crisis when I realised the supermarket own-brand toilet paper was more hole than roll and the others were extortionate. Instead we pay £28 every three months for 24 chunky roundels of recycled paper from Who Gives A Crap, which donates half its profits to clean water charities working overseas. Having bought standard bog roll again on holiday last week, I promise this remains better value for a family of four.

I have learnt to manage my subscriptions the way others do their investment portfolios. Last year, after a particularly outrageous autorenew of an "annual" £80 that was not flagged beforehand, I audited the rolling payments running my life. Most — such as monthly Tambia coffee beans (£28; my husband and I take a Thermos to work to avoid £4 flat whites) and a weekly Abel & Cole veg box (£23; better than our local supermarket) — made life more smooth but others didn't.

> "They're the best way to buy the best-value version of what you want

We'd been paying £5.49 for Paramount+ for almost a year, having started a free trial then forgotten to cancel (or watch). Our fault, yes, but so silently done it is clearly a business strategy. I'd somehow managed to sign up to Deliveroo's £4.99 monthly "gold plan" despite having not ordered a takeaway for months, and a £4.99 Uber membership for taxis I rarely took. Given how unlikely it is I'd choose either, I assume they are lucrative mistakes frequently made.

Some subscriptions become part of the furniture: TV licence, National Trust, Google storage, whatever that £2.99 a month Apple thing is. Do you remember when you last heard from Jeff Bezos before your £95 annual Prime rolled over? When my husband and I moved in together 12 years ago we both paid for another galling year.

These days we are raptorlike about which streaming service is the weakest and next to be picked off (it's Netflix, once £6.99, now £12.99, which lands each price increase just as the kids have set their hearts on watching something).

Disney, non-negotiable for parents of small children (£99.90 a year), has clearly noticed the post-toddler years drop-off and started making stuff that we want to watch instead — so we still have it, as well as Now TV and now Apple too (*Widow's Bay*!). An end-of-the-summer-holidays reckoning looms.

Live-curating an in-car playlist recently, I marvelled at Spotify's ability to blast out any song I wanted — then remembered we pay £20 a month for the privilege. A friend whose little-used YouTube sub costs £12.99 but means no adverts compares it to "getting used to business class". Another has been paying for two New York Times and LinkedIn accounts on different email addresses.

Others are genuinely life-enhancing. My husband and I have a once-a-quarter order for washing-up gloves in large because the shops near us seem only to cater for people with much smaller hands. Our shared sub to hangover-preventing Myrkl supplements has proven so successful we sometimes have to re-up between orders (£22.50 every two months, myrkl.com), although the alternating alcohol-free aperitif Botivo and 0.0 per cent Collider beer deliveries help (£25 a month, botivo.com; £30 a month, drinkcollider.com).

Trying to cut down on red meat and cheap sausages, we started a venison subscription (I know), which means a higher-quality, healthier and sustainable alternative for £7 a week (£72.99 every ten weeks, deerbox.co.uk). When I finally found skincare I wasn't allergic to I started a flexible subscription so I wouldn't run out (froyaorganics.com) and, like every other woman I know over the age of 40, I have magnesium on repeat order (£16.80 every three months, artah.co).

I'm aware all this sounds like so much millennial self-optimising — and that's certainly what subscriptions tend to cater to. Yet they're the best way, at a time when money doesn't go that far, to make sure you're buying the best-value version of what you want rather than settling for something because it's stocked round the corner.

The best subscriptions are time and money-savers — unlike the £49.99 Calm app my friend paid for recently during a stressful period at work before realising she was too busy to do any of its guided meditations.

EUAN MYLES FOR THE TIMES

Gabriella Bennett in Sauna Theatre. Below: Nick Cassenbaum performs Bubble Schmeisis (Remixed)

My sweaty night at the Fringe's hottest show

Edinburgh's newest venue is a sauna, where the temperature reaches 90C and the audience wear swimsuits. Gabriella Bennett grabs her towel

It is the hottest ticket at the Edinburgh Fringe. At 60C and rising, a seat at Summerhall's newest attraction is not for the faint-hearted. Or the faint-headed, as I discover during a 90-minute exploration of Jewish masculinity via circumcision, Tottenham Hotspur and an ocean of sweat.

Thought to be the first of its kind in the UK, the Sauna Theatre is the handiwork of Lucy Osborne, a set designer, who with James Grieve, a theatre director, is the co-founder of Sauna Sessions Arts Club. The pair believe in the galvanising power of heat and live performance to boost wellbeing. Their 80-person venue will host literary salons and morning raves as well as a theatrical interpretation of Virginia Woolf's multinarrator novel *The Waves* over the course of the month.

"We are hoping to create a sauna-native art form," Osborne says. In other words, musical or theatrical performances that have been written specifically for the conditions of the sauna. "Woolf's words, for example, lend themselves well. It is much more of a cultural experience. And everyone is equal in their bathing suits."

Sauna theatre is popular in Europe, especially in Scandinavia and Germany, where *aufguss* (guided sauna ritual) shows combine essential oils, music and choreographed towel movements in a group ceremony led by a trained sauna master. The aim is to circulate air through the space, creating waves of more intense heat by laying ice balls onto hot stones then fanning them, and generate a party atmosphere compared to sober clubbing.

Inside the Sauna Theatre guests sit on tiers of wooden benches under light fittings designed to echo a traditional theatre. Musicians are shielded by a screen to protect their instruments but the actors perform in the full heat. Surround sound blasts music into the audience.

The mercury generally nudges 90C, with regular ten-minute breaks factored into performances. But not always: *Bubble Schmeisis (Remixed),* a one-man play by Nick Cassenbaum, will run for an hour and a half without stopping. It is to be my introduction to sauna theatre.

After changing into my swimsuit in a shed, I shuffle with my towel to the entrance, where an accordionist and clarinettist are playing klezmer music. Close by are two plunge pools, a zero-alcohol bar and a line of showers.

I troop inside with 20 or so audience members, trying not to catch each other's eye. The dress code of swimsuits is strictly adhered to, and some of the crowd keep their towels wrapped around them for the performance. Grieve and Osborne have no plans to adopt "textile-free bathing"; for nervous Brits a sarong or T-shirt is permitted as long as they are made of natural fibres.

At 60C things begin rather cosily. Cassenbaum is in full command of the floor, bounding around as the lights illuminate rivers of perspiration cascading down his face. We open in Canning Town *schvitz* (steam bath), a Yiddish word derived from the German for sweating, with Poppa Alan and a motley crew of friends, before cruising through the landmarks of Cassenbaum's childhood in the East End of London. There are many eye-opening revelations. A foreskin, at least to Cassenbaum's eye, looks like a piece of bacon wrapped around the end of a "*schmeckel*".

At about 50 minutes in I realise I haven't written anything in my notebook for a while. My thoughts have slowed. A headache has crept over the front of my skull and dizziness sets in. I decide to make an exit through the side door to rehydrate. This is encouraged: Sauna Sessions Arts Club wants guests to tune into their physical states and not be afraid to hop out if needed.

"We lose touch with our bodies, and the sauna tells you to listen," Osborne says. "We're interested in people experiencing contrast." She recommends drinking water outside the theatre rather than inside, which she says helps the body to regulate.

The only problem is, I'm missing the show. Cassenbaum is a natural raconteur, and I want to strap in for the full ride. It would help to feel more clear-headed and think deeply about the thornier issues he explores, including a childhood pilgrimage to Israel. I'd like to be able to focus better on how he relates these memories and how he feels about them now. The heat makes it hard.

After an electrolyte provided by the theatre and two glasses of water, I slip back inside just as the finale kicks off. Cassenbaum strips to his trunks ("What more do you expect for £25?") and invites Scott from the audience to *schmeiss* him, whipping his naked torso and scrubbing his face with a long-tailed mop. The smell of peppermint oil diffuses through the air.

Scott starts nervously but soon gets into the rhythm. By the end he is perhaps even too confident. "What, no tip?" he deadpans when Cassenbaum tells him he can sit down. The klezmer band commiserate from behind the screen.

As the lights go up the temperature climbs after water is ladled onto hot coals. It's an ice-breaker, and I get chatting to a London-based theatre director about our varying levels of heat tolerance. What is too warm for me is toasty for her — she is planning a return visit. A small gathering forms in the open-air changing area and we swap Fringe stories from years gone by. By the end our inhibitions are gone. We get changed in front of each other as we chat. The individual changing sheds are forgotten. There is something about sitting in a room of strangers without clothes that has dissolved a layer of shyness.

The crowd disperses, the temperature cranks up and I hang around while a new audience arrive to see *The Waves*. During the ten-minute break I notice a woman by the showers being comforted by a friend, moved to tears by the performance. "There is something about the heat, the scent and the beauty of Woolf's language," Grieve says. Osborne agrees. "It makes you more open," she adds. "It is like an extra superpower."

Shows at the Sauna Theatre, Summerhall, Edinburgh, run to Aug 31

times2

Your weekday brain boost

More puzzles
Pages 14-16

Every day, Monday to Thursday, a page of extra puzzles to give your brain an extended workout

Samurai medium

Fill each grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Where the puzzles overlap, the rows and columns do not go beyond their usual length.

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Sudoku fiendish

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3	2		5					9
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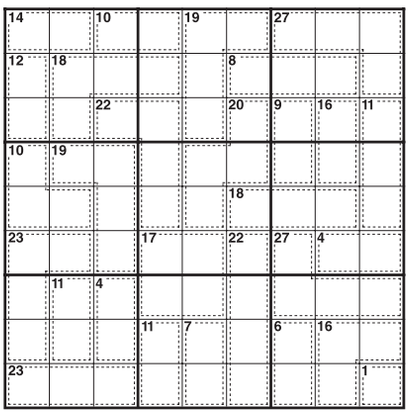
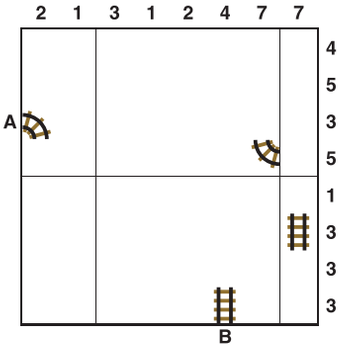
Killer tricky

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.



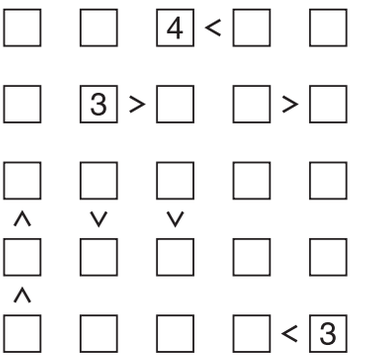
Train Tracks

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

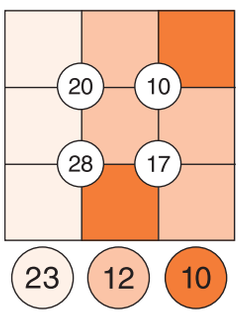


Futoshiki

Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.



Sakuro

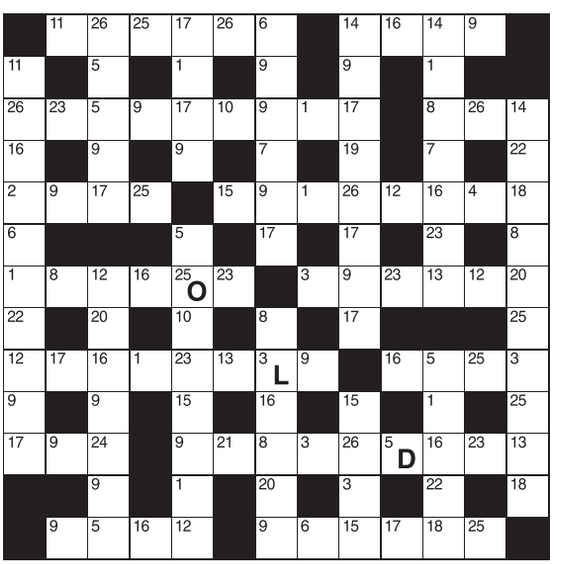


Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

Play Mini Sudoku every day Monday-Sunday online at thetimes.com and on Live app

Codeword

Every letter in the crossword-style grid, right, is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded.



A B C Ø E F G H I J K ⊻ M N Ø P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

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14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25 O	26

Mini Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x2 box contains the digits 1 to 6

Solutions in tomorrow's Times2

	4		1		2
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Yesterday's solutions

SAMURAI

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SAKURO

MINI SUDOKU

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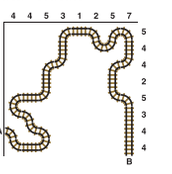

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KILLER

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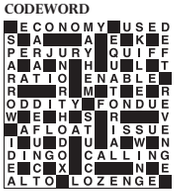


Mourinho profile not one for the trophy cabinet

Ben Dowell TV review

Mourinho
Netflix
★★☆☆☆

To be fair to José Mourinho, he didn't call himself *the* Special One. That was the nickname that followed him around like the overpowering blast of expensive aftershave rival fans assumed hung about his designer suits when he arrived to manage Roman Abramovich's Chelsea in 2004. Fresh from winning the Champions League with Porto, he only called himself *a* special one. A rare moment of modesty.

Two decades on, he follows Beckham and Pelé and gets the manager's version of one of those Netflix, er, specials. And I am afraid it isn't one for the trophy cabinet.

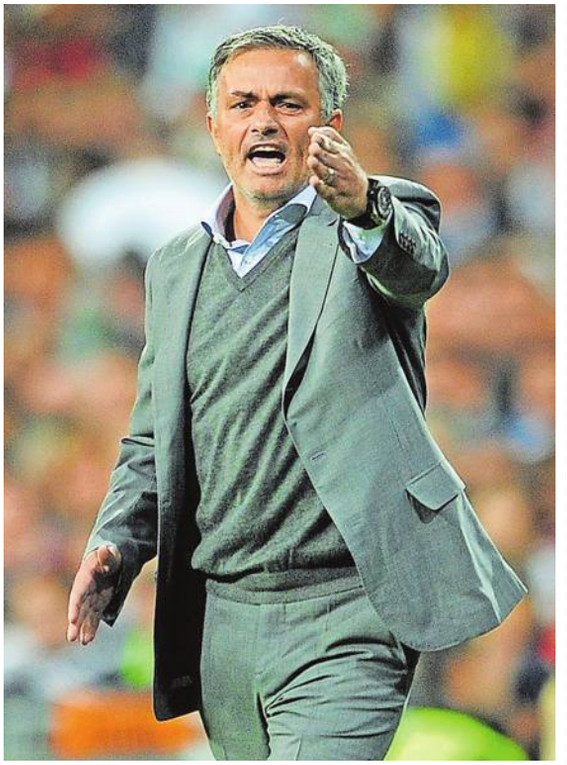
The swagger is there, even if he hasn't replicated his heady early successes. But the main issue is that he is unknowable, and he wants to keep it that way. And that's a problem when you have three hours to fill and when they're directed by Joe Pearlman, a specialist in flattering biographies who seems oddly reluctant to dig, prod and probe.

"People think they know me, but they don't know me, and I'm happy they don't," Mourinho says smiling and unchallenged. "It's a privilege for the ones that know me." Well, lucky them.

At the end he declares that the only interesting thing about someone is their achievements, and that a 500-page biography should dedicate only five pages to someone's childhood. It's a bloodless attitude that seems to fundamentally misunderstand what makes people tick.

So we get a collage of sit-down interviews and archive reminders of all his charm, obnoxious controversies, successes and feuds, with the odd nugget, such as Alex Ferguson telling us that Mourinho was offered the job as his successor at Manchester United in 2013, or John Terry revealing that Mourinho obtained training footage of Sam Allardyce's Bolton Wanderers before a big game (didn't that get Southampton into trouble recently?).

JASPER JUINEN/GETTY IMAGES



José Mourinho remains unknowable after three hours' viewing

A clip shows the journalist Polly Vernon telling us how much she fancies him. I guess no one would say that about Big Sam or Neil Warnock, or most English managers.

A rare occasion when he threatens to reveal some genuine human feeling comes when he is asked about the death of his father around the time he became United's manager, in 2016. "You don't want to make me cry because I would want [to]," he says.

We see him travelling back to Portugal, but he meets no one to tell us anything interesting. Most of the talking heads are footballers such as Terry, Frank Lampard, Didier Drogba and Zlatan Ibrahimovic telling us how he made them feel like a team and how much he hated losing. They're like post-match interviews with nifty lighting and a jazzy soundtrack.

There have been too many vanity projects like this on Netflix, with too few meaningful insights, and they are getting boring. Like the man himself, it is beautifully presented but there is nothing there. Like his career, it feels money-driven, oddly rootless, with flashes of dazzle but no lasting power.

"If you want an easy life, don't get José Mourinho," the former Chelsea chief executive Peter Kenyon chuckles at the close. The same applies if you want to make an interesting film and not what is essentially a corporate video.

Radio choice

Paul Sinha's Perfect Pub Quiz
Radio 4, 6.30pm

The comedian and stalwart of *The Chase* fronts a fifth series of his enjoyable show in which he tours the country interacting with audiences as they discuss what questions make up the ideal pub quiz. Sinha, *above*, begins in Boston, Lincolnshire, where, as well as fiendish general knowledge posers, there are local ones about the football club that has had three England captains, and the Lincolnshire town that used to be England's capital. Sinha's pleasure in engaging with the audience and allowing them to show off their knowledge, while showcasing his quizzing skills, makes you feel all warm inside. *Clair Woodward*

Times Radio

Digital, web, smart speaker, app

5.00am Tom Nunan **6.00** Salma El-Wardany and Stig Abell **10.00** Ed Vaizey **1.00pm** Stephen Sackur **2.00** Fi Glover and Roya Nikkhah **4.00** Calum Macdonald **7.00** Kait Borsay **10.00** Carole Walker **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

Radio 2

FM: 88-90.2 MHz

6.30am Sara Cox **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** DJ Spoony **4.00** Joel Dommett **7.00** Edith Bowman **9.00** The Jazz Show with Jamie Cullum **10.00** The Good Groove **12.00** OJ Borg **3.00am** Dance Sounds of the 90s (r) **4.00** Owain Wyn Evans

Radio 3

FM: 90.2-92.4 MHz

6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics
1.00pm Classical Live
Showcasing performances from 2026's summer music festivals. Rachmaninov (Symphonic Dances); JS Bach (Partita No 2 in D minor — Chaconne, BWV. 1004); Berlioz (*Symphonie fantastique*); Gombert (*Missa "Sur tous regrets"* — Credo); Bruch (Eight Pieces, Op 83); and Libby Larsen (*A Lover's Journey*)
4.00 Composer of the Week: Montgeroult (1764-1836)
How the newly married Hélène de Montgeroult joined the "grand monde" of Paris (r)
5.00 In Tune
6.00 Live BBC Proms 2026
The Los Angeles Philharmonic, with conductor Gustavo Dudamel, perform. Beethoven (Symphony No 6 in F, Pastoral); and Thomas Adès (*Dante — Part 1: Inferno*)
8.00 BBC Proms 2026
The Royal Northern Sinfonia's Music Director Dinis Sousa is joined by principal musicians Helena Gourd and Jude Carlton to perform composer Morton Feldman's *Crippled Symmetry*
10.15 Live BBC Proms 2026
The percussionist Evelyn Glennie joins the Fantasia Orchestra and BBC Singers for a genre-busting programme. Live from the Royal Albert Hall, London. Coltrane (*Welcome* arr. Harry Baker); Ellington (*It Don't Mean a Thing — if it Ain't Got That Swing* — arr. Harry Baker); Héloïse Werner (*The Wood Pigeon* — BBC commission: world premiere); Vincent Ho (*Sandman's Castle* — excerpt); Feldman (*Rothko Chapel* — excerpt); Caroline Shaw (Partita — Sarabande); Dvořák (*Czech Suite*, Op 39, Finale — Furiant); RV Williams (*Serenade to Music* arr. R. Douglas); Evelyn Glennie; Philip Sheppard (*Orologeria aureola*); Radiohead (*Pyramid Song* arr. Simon Hale); and Meredith Monk (*Panda Chant II*)
11.45 'Round Midnight
12.30am Through the Night

Radio 4

FM: 92.4-94.6 MHz

5.00am News Summary
5.04 Burnham's Pledge (r)
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today
9.00 Invisible Hands (3/6)
9.30 Inside Health (6/6)
10.00 Woman's Hour
11.00 Screenshot (6/6) (r)
11.45 Book of the Week: Hiroshima, 8.15: The Lost Memoir
Written by Kiyoshi Tanimoto and Koko Kondo (2/5)
12.04pm Call You and Yours
1.00 The World at One
1.45 Human Intelligence
Philosopher Ibn Khaldun (12/15)
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Drama: Clair
By Philip Palmer
3.00 Lady on Trial
with Lucy Worsley (9/10)
3.30 Heart and Soul (r)
4.00 Above and Below: The Battle to Save Britain's Prehistoric Art
The threat from climate change to the ancient creative past
4.30 What's Up Docs?
Exploring relaxation
5.00 PM
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Choice Paul Sinha's Perfect Pub Quiz
In Boston, Lincolnshire (1/6)
7.00 The Archers
Robert struggles to stay positive
7.15 Front Row
8.00 After EncroChat
Whether the EncroChat operation reduced the supply of drugs
8.40 In Touch
9.00 Crossing Continents
Protecting Victoria Falls (2/9)
9.30 Scam Secrets (2/8) (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime: The Vicar of Wakefield
By Oliver Goldsmith (7/10)
11.00 Wild Inside (3/4) (r)
11.30 A Good Read (3/9) (r)
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Book of the Week: Hiroshima, 8.15: The Lost Memoir (2/5) (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Radio 4 Extra

Digital only

8.00am Whatever Happened to Baby Jane Austen? **8.30** Adrian Mole: The Cappuccino Years **8.45** Small Island **9.00** Meet David Sedaris **9.30** Following the Martian Invasion **9.45** Daily Service **10.00** A Good Read **10.30** The Things We Forgot to Remember **11.00** The Waiting Game **11.30** The Senior Partner **12.00** Yes Minister **12.30pm** The Milligan Papers **1.00** Whatever Happened to Baby Jane Austen? **1.30** Adrian Mole: The Cappuccino Years **1.45** Small Island **2.00** Hoax! **2.30** Life in London **3.00** Renaissance Man: The Last Judgment of Giorgio Vasari **4.00** A Good Read **4.30** The Things We Forgot to Remember **5.00** The Waiting Game **5.30** The Senior Partner **6.00** Yes Minister **6.30** The Milligan Papers **7.00** Whatever Happened to Baby Jane Austen? **7.30** Adrian Mole: The Cappuccino Years **7.45** Small Island **8.00** Hoax! **8.30** Life in London **9.00** Renaissance Man: The Last Judgment of Giorgio Vasari **10.00** Comedy Club: Meet David Sedaris **10.30** And the Winner Is **11.00** All the World's a Globe **11.15** Foley and McColl: Interview **11.30** Chain Reaction

Radio 5 Live

MW: 693, 909

5.00am Wake Up to Money **6.00** Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell **11.00** Emma Vardy **2.00pm** Matt Chorley **4.00** 5 Live Drive **7.00** 5 Live Sport **8.25** Athletics. Coverage of the European Athletics Championships in Birmingham **10.00** Johnny I'Anson **1.00am** Dotun Adebayo

talkSPORT

MW: 1053, 1089 kHz

5.00am Early Sports Breakfast **6.00** Breakfast with Jeff Stelling **10.00** Max Scott & Darragh McAnthony **1.00pm** Hawksbee and Jacobs **4.00** Drive **7.00** The Transfer Insiders **10.00** Sports Bar **1.00am** Extra Time with Paul Ross

Talk

Digital only

6.00am Ian Collins **10.00** Julia Hartley Brewer **1.00pm** David Bull **4.00** Kevin O'Sullivan **7.00** Peter Cardwell **10.00** Petrie Hosken **1.00am** Paul Ross

6 Music

Digital only

5.00am Chris Hawkins **7.00** Nick Grimshaw **10.00** Lauren Laverne **1.00pm** Craig Charles **4.00** Huw Stephens **7.00** New Music Fix Daily **9.00** Riley & Coe **11.00** 6 Music Artist in Residence: Wolf Alice **12.00** 6 Music's Indie Forever **1.00am** From Mento to Lovers' Rock **3.00** 6 Music Live Hour **4.00** The 6 Music Playlist

Virgin Radio

Digital only

6.30am The Chris Evans Breakfast Show **10.00** Emma B **2.00pm** Ben Jones **6.00** Geoff Lloyd **10.00** Goldierocks **2.00am** Steve Denyer

Classic FM

FM: 100-102 MHz

6.30am Breakfast with Tim Lihoreau **9.00** The Hall of Fame Hour **10.00** Aled Jones **1.00pm** Anne-Marie Minhall **4.00** Margherita Taylor **7.00** Relaxing Evenings with John Brunning **9.00** Classic FM's Composer Carousel With John Brunning. A focus on Felix Mendelssohn **10.00** Calm Classics **1.00am** Bill Overton **4.00** Early Breakfast

television

PICKS OF THE DAY

Savage Mountain
Sky Documentaries/Now, 9pm

"Is it hard to have a daughter like me?" Kristin Harila asks her father in 2023 as she prepares to scale all 14 of the peaks above 8,000m in less than four months. "You are living more dangerously than most people," he says. What begins as an ordinary film of extraordinary sporting endeavour — a determined woman, now 40, and her team taking on a challenge where the standard has so far mostly been set by men — disintegrates on the final ascent. On the Bottleneck, a single-file path near the summit, on K2 she encounters a dying porter, and with large numbers of climbers in front and behind the team, eventually decides to carry on, which led to criticism. She said that it would not have been possible to carry him down given the conditions. **Helen Stewart**

Savage Mountain (Now, 9pm)

The Romans with Rob Rinder and Ruth Goodman
5, 9pm

Rob Rinder and Ruth Goodman's popular *Rich Lives, Poor Lives* series focuses on Roman Britain tonight, for an episode exploring the visit of Emperor Hadrian in AD122. "He was the most important person in the western world," we are informed by Rinder in terminology admirable for its accessibility if not erudition. "He wasn't just hugely powerful and worshipped as a god, he was also something of a control freak." Rinder plays the part of the governor of Britain at the time, the man responsible for making a start on Hadrian's Wall before the inspection and who appears to have viewed success as a transfer out of Londinium to somewhere warmer. A toga fitting sees Rinder standing taller and straighter, swathed in yards of expensive wool. Ruth Goodman investigates the lives of ordinary people living under Roman rule. **HS**

BBC1

6.00am Breakfast
9.30 Animal Park (r) (AD)
10.00 Trace, Track, Get My Car Back (r)
10.30 Live European Athletics Championships: Birmingham 2026. Jeanette Kwakye presents coverage of the opening session on day two, including the heats of the men's 100m and women's 800m
1.15pm BBC News at One; Weather
1.40 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.50 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing. A sewing machine table at Altrincham recycling centre
2.45 Escape to the Country. Nicki Chapman helps a couple from Scotland look for a property in the Cotswolds (r) (AD)
3.30 The Repair Shop. The experts restore a table, and a pair of rugby boots (r) (AD)
4.30 The Answer Run. Quiz show
5.15 Pointless. Alexander Armstrong is joined by co-host Ria Lina (r)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

7.00 **The One Show** Alex Jones and Roman Kemp continue the show's 20th birthday celebration

7.30 **EastEnders** Jean's concerns grow about Lily, while a worrying situation escalates for Chelsea (AD)

8.00 **Live European Athletics Championships: Birmingham 2026** Gabby Logan presents further coverage of the evening session on day two from Alexander Stadium, including the men's 100m final. Also taking place tonight are the men's long jump and women's 100m hurdles finals. With analysis from Jessica Ennis-Hill and Greg Rutherford, and commentary provided by Steve Cram, Steve Backley, Andrew Cotter, Colin Jackson and Paula Radcliffe

10.00 **BBC News at Ten**

10.30 **BBC Regional News and Weather**
10.40 **FILM: The Boys in the Boat (12, 2023)** A group of underdogs, at the height of the Great Depression, are thrust into the spotlight, taking on elite rivals from around the world as part of the American rowing team at the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympic Games. Fact-based drama starring Joel Edgerton and Callum Turner. Directed by George Clooney (AD)

12.40am-6.00 BBC News

BBC2

6.15am Homes Under the Hammer (r)
7.15 Money for Nothing (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: The Great British Sewing Bee. Mexican fashions (r) (AD, SL)
9.00 BBC News
10.30 Antiques Road Trip (r)
11.15 Homes Under the Hammer (r)
12.15pm Bargain Hunt (r) (AD)
1.00 Richard Osman's House of Games (r)
1.30 The Finish Line. Quiz show (r)
2.15 Do You Know Your Place? Dudley (r)
2.45 The Farmers' Country Showdown. Farmers attend Guildford Farmers' Market (r)
3.30 Spy in the Ocean (r) (AD)
4.30 Vintage Antiques Roadshow. From Sherborne School, Dorset. From 2003 (r)
5.15 Flog It! From Basingstoke (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games. With Chris Bisson, Danielle Harold, Katharine Merry and Robert Webb (r)
6.30 Bear Grylls: Wild Reckoning. A couple with a large age gap disagree on how to parent their children (r) (AD)

7.00 **Live European Athletics Championships: Birmingham 2026** Coverage of the evening session on day two from Alexander Stadium, including the finals of the men's hammer and women's 5,000m. Coverage continues on BBC1

8.00 **The Great British Sewing Bee** The sewers tackle the wide world of sport. They craft men's swimming shorts, outfits recycled from windsurf sails and personalised, made-to-measure bowling shirts (5/10) (AD)

9.00 **Bloody Mary: Lucy Worsley Investigates** Lucy Worsley asks whether "Bloody Mary", England's first crowned queen and Henry VIII's eldest daughter, should be remembered as a pioneer or a tyrant. Last in the series (r) (AD)

10.00 **Live at the Apollo** Stand-up comedy by Emmanuel Sonubi, Troy Hawke and Olga Koch (5/7) (r)

10.30 **Newsnight** Headline analysis presented by Matt Chorley

11.05 **The Vampire Lestat: Interview with the Vampire** Daniel's probing triggers a troubled Lestat, reminding him of his maker and a lost love, while Louis takes belated revenge (3/7) (AD)
11.55 **The Vampire Lestat: Interview with the Vampire** Lestat lies to Daniel and lords it over Armand (4/7) (AD)

12.45am-1.45 Sign Zone: Uncanny Ian believes his house was haunted by an entity which would shake drawers, ring bells and even flush the toilet. Danny Robins investigates if the could be a scientific explanation for all this (r) (AD, SL)

ITV1

6.00am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning
1.30pm ITV News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal. David Dickinson and the team visit Peterborough, where Tracey Thackery misses out on a real opportunity when she passes on a vase that goes on to do well at auction (r) (AD)
3.00 Deal or No Deal. Stephen Mulhern hosts as a contestant tries to open the 22 red boxes in the right order, taking on the infamous Banker for the chance to win a life-changing cash prize (r) (AD)
4.00 Tipping Point. Ben Shephard hosts the arcade-themed quiz in which contestants drop tokens down a choice of four chutes in the hope of winning a £10,000 jackpot (r)
5.00 The Chase. Bradley Walsh presents as contestants from Knutsford, London, Manchester and Woking work as a team to take on one of the ruthless Chasers (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

7.30 **Inside the Langham: Britain's First Grand Hotel** The managing director oversees progress on the Langham Venice, in northern Italy (4/6) (AD)

8.00 **Emmerdale** Caleb is frustrated, while Billy and Dawn plan their escape and Jacob is shocked (AD)

8.30 **Coronation Street** Tim and Sally reel from the news of Richie's charge, and Jodie sets her sights on Kit (AD)

9.00 **Cold Case Forensics: In the Blood** Forensic scientist Angela Gallop and her team reveal how clues in blood traces helped solve two crimes, including the killing of 10-year-old Damilola Taylor. Last in the series. *See picks of the day* (AD)

10.00 **ITV News at Ten; Weather;** followed by Regional News

10.45 **FILM: The Spy Who Loved Me (PG, 1977)** James Bond teams up with a KGB agent to recover missing British and Soviet nuclear submarines, before whoever stole them can use their warheads. Unfortunately, 007 was responsible for the death of his new ally's lover — and she wants to make him pay before their mission is complete. Adventure with Roger Moore and Barbara Bach (AD)

12.55am Shop on TV 3.00 The Summit. The 14 Brits who set off to climb one of New Zealand's highest peaks are down to 10. Having made it to the second base camp, they face a vote-off (r) (AD, SL) **3.50** Unwind with ITV **5.05-6.00** Long Lost Family: Born Without Trace (r) (AD, SL)

Channel 4

6.30am The King of Queens (r) (AD)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r) (AD)
9.10 Frasier (r) (AD)
11.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. The chef helps a failing New York diner (r)
12.05pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It. Meeting an avid collector and former mayor (r) (AD)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway. A pair of strangers in Leicester are given the opportunity to buy a property (r)
2.10 Countdown. With Pauline McLynn
3.00 A Place in the Sun. Jean Johansson goes house hunting in Los Cristianos (r)
4.00 Saving Country Houses with Penelope Keith. Hidden secrets are unearthed at Staffordshire's Whitmore Hall (r) (AD)
5.00 Château DIY. A pair convert a narrow space in Chateau Trois Cloches into a luxurious functional bathroom (r) (AD)
6.00 American Pickers. Junk expert Mike Wolfe falls for the greatest classic Ford pick-up he has ever seen (r) (AD)

7.00 **Channel 4 News**

8.00 **Dover 24/7: Britain's Busiest Port** The cargo team race to unload 3,000 tons of steel, Border Force agents uncover suspicious packages and staff hold a remembrance service. Last in the series (AD)

9.00 **Celebrity Hunted** Two of the contestants find themselves surrounded at a country hotel, while another pair brave exposure at a hospital appointment for preventative cancer treatment (AD)

10.00 **Gogglebox** The households' opinions of shows from November 2025, including *Celebrity Race Across the World*, *All's Fair*, *Squid Game: The Challenge*, *The 1% Club*, *Come Dine with Me: Teens* and *Police Interceptors* (r) (AD)

11.05 **Secret Lives of Gypsy Wives** Trewley clashes with her older sisters when they try to stop her going out to meet a friend, claiming she should still be subject to curfews and chaperones. Mum Tina joins everyone at the launch party for Trewley's new make-up range (r) (AD)

12.05am Naked Attraction (r) (AD) **1.00** Ramsay's Hotel Hell (r) (AD, SL) **1.50** Levison Wood: Walking with Orangutans (r) (AD, SL) **2.45 FILM: The Kid Detective (15, 2020)** Comedy drama starring Adam Brody (SL) **4.25** A Place in the Sun (r) **4.55** The Piano (r) (AD, SL) **5.50-6.30** Countdown (r)

5

6.00am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis
12.45pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright
2.20 FILM: Danger Rocks the Cradle (PG, TVM, 2022) When a pregnant high school senior disappears her teacher begins to worry that the teenager may have been taken against her will. Thriller starring Devin Cecchetto and Fallon Bowman (AD)
4.00 Castle. Hong Kong detective Zhang works with Beckett and Castle on the investigation into the murder of an ex-con who had been working for a repossession firm. Guest starring Linda Park (r)
4.55 Love Nature. In a regular backyard, showing how easy it is to make a pond (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Corfu: Jewel of the Med. A profile of Corfu, in which cameras follow locals and tourists and view local cuisine (r)
6.55 5 News Update

7.00 **The Yorkshire Vet: At Home with the Greens** A woman takes Peanut, the oldest of her 13 cats, to the surgery for a check-up and rewards the moggie with a luxury cat tree (3/4) (r)

7.55 **5 News Update**

8.00 **Inside Longleat** Cameras follow a bat conservation team and a group of moth enthusiasts as they both carry out annual surveys, and Lady Bath and a keeper talk about Longleat's giraffes and their special history at Longleat

9.00 **The Romans with Rob Rinder and Ruth Goodman** Rob and Ruth delve into 122 AD, when the Emperor Hadrian made a dramatic visit to Roman Britain, a moment that would change the fortunes of rich and poor alike. Rob follows the powerful figures at the heart of Roman Londinium, while Ruth investigates the lives of the ordinary people. *See picks of the day*

10.30 **The Bomb on the Boat: The Murder of Lord Mountbatten** The events surrounding the killing of Louis Mountbatten in August 1979, when his boat was blown up at sea by the IRA off the west coast of the Republic of Ireland. Royal insiders, local journalists and victims' family members recall the attack, revealing how Thomas McMahon slipped onto the unguarded Shadow V at night to plant the bomb (r)

12.05am Serial Killer Wives (r) (AD) **1.00** Cruise TV (r) **2.00** Entertainment News on 5 (r) **2.10** GPs: Behind Closed Doors (r) **3.00** Castle (r) **3.50** Friends (r) (AD) **4.35** Yorkshire (r) (SL) **5.25** Entertainment News on 5 **5.35** Paw Patrol (r) (SL) **5.45-6.00** The Adventures of Paddington (r) (SL)

television

Cold Case Forensics: In the Blood
ITV1, 9pm

Subtitled *In the Blood*, this programme explains how justice can hang on the tiniest fibre or smallest stain. It tracks how the forensic scientist Angela Gallop and her team solved two very different cases: the 1999 killing of the Bournemouth sex shop owner Adam Shaw and the murder of Damilola Taylor in 2000. Damilola's father Richard, who died in 2024, is seen here discussing the impact Gallop's work had on his family's fight for truth. **Victoria Segal**

Gomorrah: The Origins
Sky Atlantic, 9pm/10pm

Black lace veils, crucifixes, pasta genovese: this mob-drama prequel leans in hard to its setting in 1970s Naples, outlining the early years of the crime boss Pietro Sevastano (embodied in his larval teenage form by Luca Lubrano). He faces up to maternal interference in his burgeoning gangster lifestyle and bonds himself tighter to the troubled Imma (Tullia Venezia), while alliances fracture and reform dangerously around him. **VS**

STREAMING CHOICE

Kabul
iPlayer

This intense six-part drama is set during the chaotic withdrawal of American troops from Kabul, Afghanistan in 2021. As the Taliban enters the city, the Nazany family, like many civilians, are forced to flee. As well as the family, the action unfolds from the perspective of the multinational team, including French police, Italian diplomats, German military and American intelligence services. **Joe Clay**

FILM CHOICE

Full Metal Jacket (15, 1987)
Sky Cinema Drama, 8pm

Stanley Kubrick's Vietnam picture is, like most great war films, about more than just conflict. Bleak and violent, it examines how ordinary men become indoctrinated and tainted by combat. The film is divided into two segments — the first deals with the basic training under a formidable drill sergeant (real-life Marine Corps veteran R Lee Ermey). The second follows the recruits through the eyes of the young soldiers, played by actors including Matthew Modine, now shaped into killing machines. (111min) **Wendy Ide**

BBC4

7.00pm The Architecture the Railways Built. The Ffestiniog railway in north Wales (2/10) (AD) **7.40** The Flying Gardener. From Dumfries and Galloway (AD) **7.55** To the Manor Born. Audrey leaves Grantleigh Manor **8.30** Keeping Up Appearances. Hyacinth once again tries to rescue Richard from social obscurity **9.00** Ardal O'Hanlon: Tomb Raider. Exploring major archaeological finds in Ireland's history **10.00** Kamikaze: An Untold History. Japanese and US veterans reflect on the impact of the suicide missions **11.30** The Sky at Night. Exploring the mysteries of black holes **12.00** The Wildest Weather in the Universe: Horizon. Documentary **1.00am** Beautiful Equations **2.00** The Flying Gardener (AD) **2.15am-3.15** Ardal O'Hanlon: Tomb Raider

Sky Arts

6.00am A Swan Lake **7.55** Artist of the Year: Masterclass (AD) **8.55** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **9.55** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.00** Discovering (AD) **12.00** The Art of Film with Ian Nathan (AD) **1.00pm** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **2.00** The Alfred Hitchcock Hour **3.00** The Eighties (AD) **4.00** Discovering (AD) **5.00** Portrait Artist of the Year 2022 (AD) **6.00** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **7.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **8.00** The World in a Painting: Ingres' Diamond. A portrait featuring a ring **9.15** Art Traffickers: Treasures Stolen from the Tombs (AD) **10.15** Wonderland: Gothic (AD) **11.15** The Movies **12.15am** Peter O'Toole: Along the Sky Road to Aqaba **2.15** The V&A Presents Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser **4.05** Sky Arts Book Club **5.00am-6.00** The Art of Film (AD)

More4

8.55am Find It, Fix It, Flog It (AD) **10.00** Four in a Bed **12.40pm** Come Dine with Me (AD) **3.20** Four in a Bed **5.50** Car SOS (AD) **7.55** Grand Designs. An intrepid pair want to build a Kiwi-style hill house in Worcestershire (2/10) (AD) **9.00** Oti and Richard's South African Odyssey. Oti and Richard's journey concludes in the Eastern Cape. Last in the series (AD) **10.00** 24 Hours in A&E. A 51-year-old man who has fallen 20ft from a ladder, and a retired pharmacologist receives help for a chronic gas problem (AD) **11.05** 24 Hours in A&E. A 68-year-old actor with a suspected broken shoulder receives a more worrying diagnosis (3/8) (AD) **12.05am** 999: On the Front Line **1.10** 24 Hours in A&E (AD) **3.20am-3.45** A Place in the Sun

Live sport today

Manchester captain Jos Buttler

Live The Hundred: Manchester Super Giants Women v Sunrisers Leeds Women
Sky Sports Cricket, 2.45pm-6, Sky Sports Main Event, 3pm-6 (Start-time **3.00**). Coverage from Emirates Old Trafford

Live Rugby Union: Sharks v New Zealand
Sky Sports Action, 5.45pm-8, Sky Sports +, 6pm-8 (Kick-off **6.00**). Coverage of the tour match at Hollywoodbets Kings Park in Durban

Live The Hundred: Manchester Super Giants Men v Sunrisers Leeds Men
Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports Cricket, 6pm-9.30 (Start-time **6.30**). Coverage from Emirates Old Trafford

Live Tennis
Sky Sports +, Sky Sports Tennis, 9pm-11
Coverage from the Canadian Open on day 10 in Montreal

Live CPL: Jamaica Kingsmen v Barbados Tridents
TNT Sports 2, 12.30am-4.45
The T20 match in Jamaica

Talking Pictures

7.40am FILM: The Captain's Paradise (PG, 1953) (b/w) **9.25** Cinebox Memories **9.30 FILM: Grand National Night (PG, 1953)** (b/w) **11.05** Le Poulet (b/w) **11.25 FILM: Orders Are Orders (U, 1955)** (b/w) **1.00pm** The Adventures of William Tell (b/w) **1.30 FILM: Doctor in Distress (PG, 1963) 3.35** Kim Novak: The Golden Age Rebel **4.40 FILM: Whispering Smith Hits London (PG, 1952)** (b/w) **6.20** Litter Defence Volunteers **6.25** Whiplash (b/w) **6.55** The Man from UNCLE **7.55** Buccaneer **9.00 FILM: Murder by Decree (15, 1978)** Sherlock Holmes mystery **11.35** Fortean TV. The Yeti **12.10am FILM: The Nudist Story (15, 1960)** Romance **2.00 FILM: The Stranger (PG, 1946) 3.55-4.00** New Seekers: Keep Britain Tidy

Film4

11.00am Man in the Saddle (U, 1951) Western starring Randolph Scott **12.45pm The Black Swan (PG, 1942)** Swashbuckling adventure with Tyrone Power **2.30 Fantastic Voyage (U, 1966)** Sci-fi adventure starring Raquel Welch **4.35 The Kid Who Would Be King (PG, 2019)** Fantasy adventure with Louis Ashbourne Serkis (AD) **7.00** Film4 Interview Programmes: Talking Film. Stars and directors talk about the experience of making movies in this compendium **7.05 See How They Run (12, 2022)** Mystery comedy starring Sam Rockwell and Saoirse Ronan (AD) **9.00 Missing (15, 2023)** Thriller starring Storm Reid and Nia Long **11.15 Jennifer's Body (15, 2009)** Comedy horror starring Megan Fox **1.20am-3.35 Plan B (18, 2021)** Comedy starring Kuhoo Verma

BBC3

7.00pm The Catch Up **7.05** Spud. Comedy drama **7.25 FILM: Lara Croft — Tomb Raider (15, 2001)** Action adventure starring Angelina Jolie (AD) **9.00** RuPaul's Drag Race UK: Meet the Queens. RuPaul introduces the queens competing for the title **9.20 FILM: Bridget Jones's Diary (15, 2001)** Romantic comedy starring Renée Zellweger (AD) **10.55 FILM: Bridget Jones — The Edge of Reason (15, 2004)** Romantic comedy sequel with Renée Zellweger, Colin Firth, Hugh Grant and Jim Broadbent (AD) **12.35am** Matthew Perry and the Ketamine Queen (AD) **1.35** Stacey Dooley: Ready for War? (AD) **2.35** My Mate's a Bad Date **2.55am-3.55** Stacey Dooley: Blood, Sweat and T-Shirts (AD, SL)

ITV2

6.00am Backyard Builds (SL) **6.30** Dress to Impress (AD, SL) **7.30** The Real Housewives of Salt Lake City **8.20** The Real Housewives of Orange County **9.15** The Only Way Is Essex **10.15** Dawson's Creek **11.10** Charmed **12.10pm** Deal or No Deal (AD) **1.10** Supermarket Sweep **2.10** The Floor USA (AD) **3.10** The Only Way Is Essex **4.10** The Real Housewives of Potomac **5.00** The Real Housewives of Orange County **5.55** Celebrity Catchphrase (AD) **7.00** The Floor (AD) **8.00** The 1% Club (AD) **9.00** Olivia Attwood: The Price of Perfection. In Istanbul (2/6) **10.00** Family Guy (AD) **11.35** American Dad! (AD) **12.35am** Bob's Burgers (AD) **1.30** Plebs (AD, SL) **1.55am-2.20** Deep Fake Neighbour Wars (SL)

ITV3

6.00am George and Mildred **7.05** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **8.10** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **9.10** Agatha Christie's Poirot (AD) **11.30** Heartbeat (AD) **1.35pm** Midsomer Murders (AD) **3.35** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **4.40** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **5.50** Heartbeat. Rural drama (AD) **8.00** Vera. Two people are murdered at a country house (3/4) (AD) **10.00** Grantchester. Geordie and new vicar Alphy Kottaram get off on the wrong foot (3/8) (AD) **11.00** Grantchester. A body is found in the basement of a country manor during a party (4/8) (AD) **11.50** Trial & Retribution. Part two of two. The team search for the missing nanny (8/10) **1.20am-2.20** Agatha Christie's Poirot. Stars David Suchet (AD)

ITV4

6.00am Magnum, PI (AD) **8.05** Robin of Sherwood **9.10** Boon **10.20** The Professionals (AD) **11.25** Robin of Sherwood **12.30pm** Magnum, PI (AD) **2.35** Dempsey and Makepeace (AD) **3.45** Boon **4.50** The Professionals (AD) **5.50** Minder. Mike Reid guest stars (AD) **7.00** The Motorbike Show. Henry Cole goes back to his roots as a dispatch rider in London **8.00** King of the Roads. County Antrim in Northern Ireland hosts the Armoy Race of Legends **9.00** Ice Road Truckers. Lisa Kelly and Tony Molesky transport the biggest loads of the season so far **10.00** All Elite Wrestling: Collision. Hard-hitting wrestling action **12.00** Dark Side of the Ring **12.55am** The Professionals (AD, SL) **1.55am-2.50** BattleBots

U&Drama

6.00am Teleshopping **7.15** The Bill **8.05** Doctors **9.20** Classic Holby City **10.40** Casualty (AD) **11.40** The Bill **12.40pm** Classic EastEnders **2.00** Neighbours **3.00** Whitstable Pearl (AD) **4.05** Lovejoy **5.20** As Time Goes By **6.00** Last of the Summer Wine **8.00** 'Allo 'Allo! Von Strohm finds out that the stolen money was forged **8.35** 'Allo 'Allo! Leclercis arrested **9.05** 'Allo 'Allo! Rene escapes exploding Christmas puddings **9.40** New Tricks. The team investigates the death of a college professor (2/10) (AD) **11.00** Luther. The detective hunts for a masked killer (1/4) (AD) **12.15am** Lovejoy **1.20** Sister Boniface Mysteries (AD) **2.30** Hotel Portofino (SL) **3.25** Birds of a Feather **4.00am-6.00** Teleshopping

Variations

BBC1 N Ireland
10.40pm House of the Year (r) 11.10 FILM: The Boys in the Boat (2023) Fact-based drama with Joel Edgerton 1.10am-6.00 BBC News

BBC1 Scotland
7.00pm-7.30 River City (r) 12.35am Scotcast (r) 1.05 Weather for the Week Ahead 1.10am-6.00 News

STV
12.55am-3.00 Shop on TV 3.50am-6.00 Night Vision

BBC Scotland
7.00pm Reporting Scotland 7.30 My Kind of Town (r) 8.00 This Farming Life (r) 9.00 Murder Trial. A former gamekeeper is accused of murder (1/2) 10.00 David Wilson's Crime Files (r) 11.00 Scotcast 11.30pm-12.00 Icons of Football (r)

S4C
6.00am Cyw 12.00 News; Weather 12.05pm Codi Pac (r) 12.30 Heno (r) 1.00 Ralïo+ (r) 1.30 Arfordir Cymru: Sir Benfro (r) 2.00 News; Weather 2.05 Prynhawn Da 3.00 News; Weather 3.05 Cefn Gwlad (r) 4.00 Awr Fawr: Blociau Lliw (r) 4.05 Twm Twrch (r) 4.15 Fferm Fach (r) 4.30 Blero yn Mynd i Ocido (r) 4.45 Byd Tad-Cu (r) 5.00 Stwnsh: Dreigiau — Marchogion Berc (r) 5.25 Y Smyrffs (r) 5.40 Un Cwestiwn (r) 6.00 Y Ci Perffaith (r) 6.30 Codi Hwyl (r) 7.00 Heno 7.30 News; Weather 8.00 Pobol y Cwm 8.25 Nol o'r Dibyn gyda Iolo Williams (r) 8.55 News; Weather 9.00 Sioe Môn 2026. Highlights from the Anglesey County Show 10.00 Iaith ar Daith. Richard Parks and Lowri Morgan take a linguistic road trip across Wales 11.00pm-12.05am Y Cosmos. How light escapes from the sun (r)

PBS America

8.00am Weathered: Earth's Extremes **8.35** Digging Up Britain's Past **9.35** Eclipse Across Europe **10.40** 1066: A Year to Conquer England **11.55** Inside Japan's War **1.00pm** Weathered: Earth's Extremes **1.35** Digging Up Britain's Past **2.35** Eclipse Across Europe **3.50** 1066: A Year to Conquer England **5.05** Inside Japan's War **6.15** Digging Up Britain's Past **7.15** Eclipse Across Europe. A look at the best places and safest ways to view the solar eclipse **8.25** 1066: A Year to Conquer England. King Harold of England has to take on two invasion forces **9.40** Inside Japan's War. How Japan secured victory in Malaya **10.50** Eclipse Across Europe **12.00** 1066: A Year to Conquer England. Docudrama **1.15am-2.00** Weathered: Earth's Extremes

Sky Atlantic

6.00am Fish Town (r) **8.00** Billions (r) (AD) **10.15** House of the Dragon (r) (AD) **12.35pm** Homicide: Life on the Street (r) **2.30** Billions (r) (AD) **4.40** The Last of Us (r) (AD) **6.50** House of the Dragon (r) (AD) **8.00** House of the Dragon. Rhaenyra oversteps at the council (r) (AD) **9.00** Gomorrah: The Origins. Pietro and Imma come to terms with what happened the night before. *See picks of the day* (5/6) **10.00** Gomorrah: The Origins. Angelo suffers a terrible blow. Last in the series. *See picks of the day* **11.00** House of the Dragon. Rhaenyra positions herself to take King's Landing (r) (AD) **12.15am** House of the Dragon. Fantasy (r) (AD) **1.30** Billions (r) (AD) **3.45** The Guest Wing (r) (AD) **4.35** Sort Of (r) (AD) **5.05am-6.00** The Guest Wing (r) (AD)

Sky Docs

6.00am The 2000s (r) **7.00** Discovering: John Hurt (r) (AD) **8.00** The Directors (r) (AD) **9.00** 100 Foot Wave (r) (AD) **10.00** Juan Carlos: Downfall of the King (r) **10.55** Celtics City (r) (AD) **12.00 FILM: I Am Bruce Lee (15, 2011)** (AD) **2.00pm** Williams & Mansell: Red 5 (r) (AD) **3.50** My Icon: Leon Pryce (r) (AD) **4.00** The Directors (r) (AD) **4.55** Discovering: John Hurt (r) (AD) **5.50** Edge of the Earth (r) (AD) **7.00 FILM: Touching the Void (15, 2003)** Documentary **9.00** Savage Mountain. *See picks of the day* (AD) **11.00 FILM: Lancaster (PG, 2022)** The bomber synonymous with the Dambusters (AD) **1.00am FILM: Dave Not Coming Back (PG, 2020) 2.50** Mr Dynamite: The Rise of James Brown (r) (AD) **5.00am-6.00** Discovering (r) (AD)

U&Yesterday

6.10am Abandoned Engineering (AD) **8.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics (AD) **10.00** Secret Nazi Bases **11.00** Hitler's Countdown to War **12.00** Antiques Roadshow **2.00pm** Bangers & Cash (AD) **4.00** Secret Nazi Bases **5.00** Hitler's Countdown to War **6.00** Antiques Roadshow **7.00** A Perfect Planet. The solar force that powers Earth (AD) **8.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics. A Subaru Pick-up (AD) **9.00** Bangers & Cash. A car built in Britain for the US market (AD) **10.00** Bangers & Cash. A collection of Austin Mini Metros (AD) **11.00** Bangers & Cash. An Army Mercedes G wagon (AD) **12.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics (AD) **1.00am** Find It, Fix It, Flog It **2.00** Abandoned Engineering (AD) **3.00am-6.10** Teleshopping

MindGames

Tetonor Moderate No 699

70	54	120	21
47	176	23	117
136	22	132	42
30	104	43	90

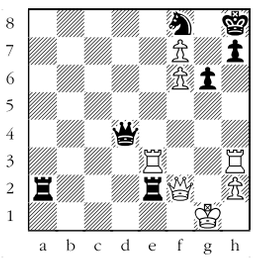
1	2	2		3		8			21	22	39				68

When complete, the strip below the grid can be split into eight pairs of numbers. Adding the numbers in a pair gives one of the 16 numbers in the grid. Multiplying them gives a different number in the grid. For example, a 4 and 6 in the strip could be paired to make 10 (4+6) and 24 (4x6) in the grid. Enter each sum below the corresponding number in the grid. The blanks in the strip must be deduced, bearing in mind the numbers are listed in ascending order.

The next Tetonor puzzle will appear on Thursday

For more puzzles, including Mini Sudoku, extra Codeword, Train Tracks and Futoshiki go to page 10

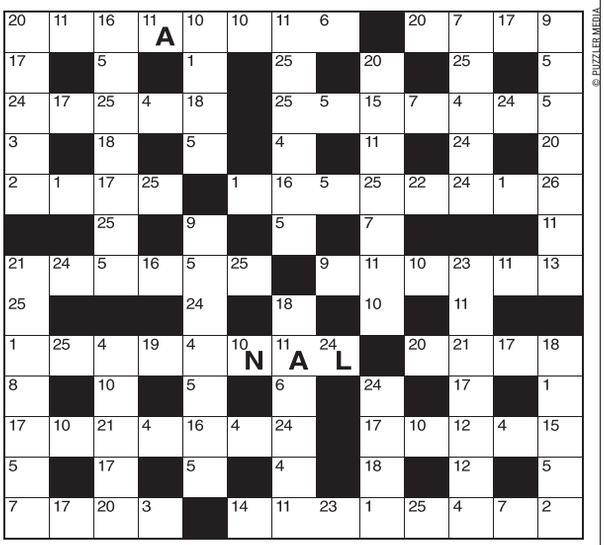
Winning Move



White to play.
This position is from Nouri-Garcia Ramos, Hong Kong 2026.

Black is a piece ahead and seems to have terrible threats against the white king. The obvious try for White is 1 Rxe2, after which play can go 1 ... Qg4+ 2 Rg3 Qxe2 3 Qxe2 Rxe2 4 Rd3 and, with the rook coming to d8, White has sufficient counterplay to force a draw. White, to his credit, did not settle for this but found something better. What?

Codeword No 5916



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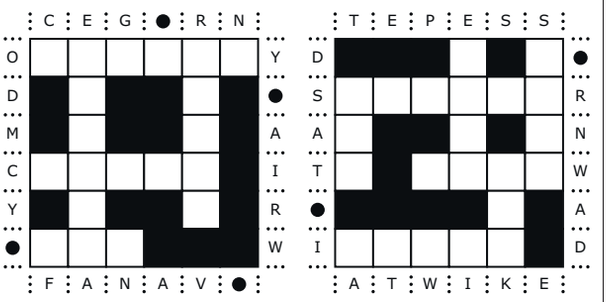
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
									N	A				
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		
										L				

Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded. *Yesterday's solution, right*

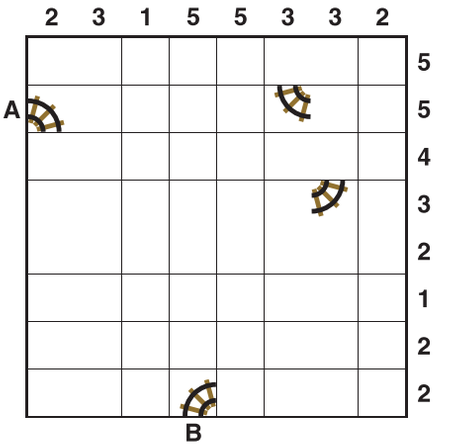
Clueless Stuck on Codeword? To receive 4 random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. If you have an old newspaper and need clues from the past 7 days, call 0905 624 0024. Calls to 0905 cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

Lexica Easy No 9047 Hard No 9048



Slide the letters either horizontally or vertically back into the grid to produce a completed crossword. Letters are allowed to slide over other letters

Train Tracks No 2941



Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

Quintagram® No 2643

Solve all five **cryptic** clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Latest reports from all four corners (4)

2 Game is roughly creating likenesses (6)

3 Serious attention followed by retreat (7)

4 Caught a rubbish container with alien storage unit (7)

5 City area still overjoyed (8)

A	A	A	A	B	C	C	C
E	E	E	E	E	E	G	I
I	I	M	N	N	N	R	S
S	S	S	T	T	T	T	W

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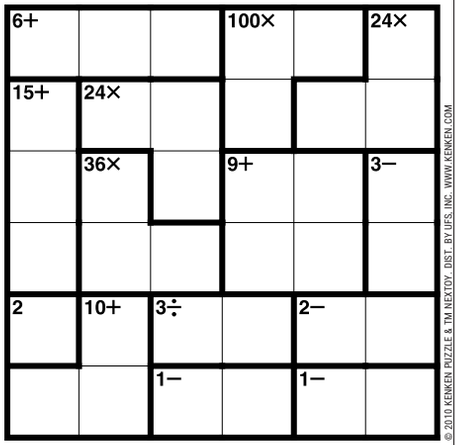
KenKen Medium No 6908



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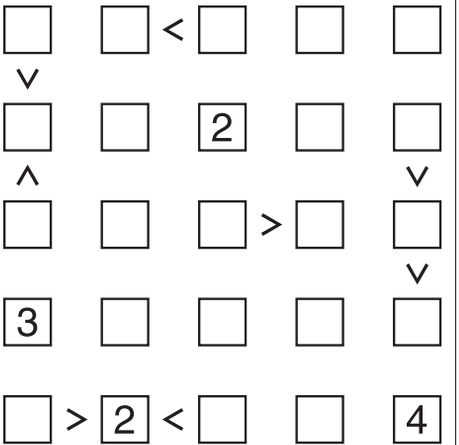
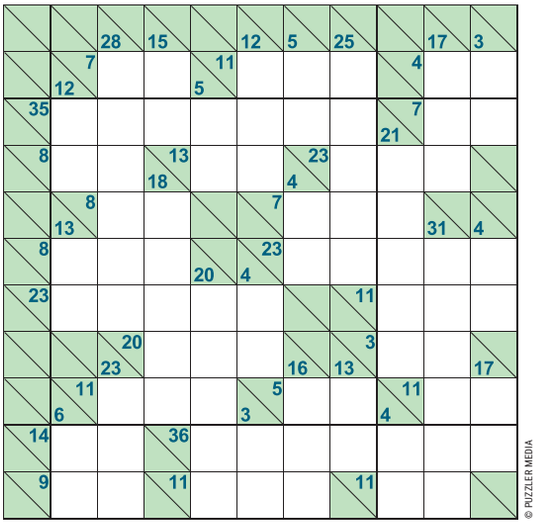
All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

Futoshiki No 5456



Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

Kakuro No 4415



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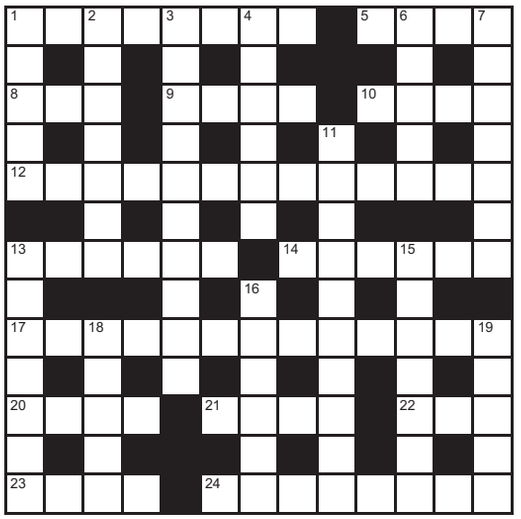
Fill the grid using the numbers 1 to 9 only. The numbers in each horizontal or vertical run of white squares add up to the total in the triangle to its left or above it. The same number may occur more than once in a row or column, but not within the same run of white squares.

MindGames

times2 Crossword No 10,232



Across

1 Academic investigation and study (8)
5 Detailed list of features or requirements (4)
8 Leafy herb (3)
9 Raw material for ceramics (4)
10 Low horse-drawn cart (4)
12 Pompous, conceited (4-9)
13 Took notice of (6)
14 Means of exit (6)
17 Cinema worker (13)
20 Split into loose threads (4)
21 *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* poet (4)
22 Dried grass for fodder (3)
23 Unpleasant grin (4)
24 Endanger (8)

Down

1 Visual puzzle (5)
2 Pale azure colour (3,4)
3 Ancient mathematician (10)
4 Vehicle immobilisers (6)
6 Warm hooded coat (5)
7 Prairie wives (7)
11 Cave dweller (10)
13 Optimistic (7)
15 Descriptive nickname (7)
16 Laundry stiffening agent (6)
18 Speechify (5)
19 Briefly wear to assess fit (3,2)

Solution to Crossword 10,231

L	A	C	O	N	I	C	■	S	N	U	F	F
I	■	A	■	O	■	H	■	H	■	R	■	O
V	E	R	N	A	L	E	Q	U	I	N	O	X
I	■	E	■	H	■	R	■	T	■	■	■	T
D	E	F	T	■	P	R	E	A	C	H	E	R
■	■	U	■	G	■	Y	■	W	■	O	■	O
A	L	L	■	A	L	P	H	A	■	B	E	T
P	■	L	■	Z	■	I	■	Y	■	N	■	■
O	L	Y	M	P	I	C	S	■	H	O	O	T
L	■	■	■	A	■	K	■	A	■	B	■	H
O	B	J	E	C	T	I	O	N	A	B	L	E
G	■	A	■	H	■	N	■	T	■	E	■	S
Y	O	B	B	O	■	G	R	I	D	D	L	E

Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Bridge Andrew Robson

On today's deal from a social Teams, the excellent 6♥ slam was reached at both tables. At Table One, West chose to lead his singleton, despite it being in dummy's suit. At Table Two, West led the eight of his partner's spades. As declarer, plan the play in each scenario.

Table One — ♦4 lead. That diamond is surely a singleton — why else lead dummy's suit? You cannot draw all the trumps, or you won't be able to get back to dummy's diamonds. And it'll be imperative for you to lead a second diamond from your hand so that, if West ruffs, he is effectively ruffing his partner's winner (and you make five diamond tricks).

The correct line after winning the diamond is to cash the queen of hearts and lead a low heart to your ace. Both opponents follow to two rounds so, at trick four, you lead up your second diamond. If West ruffs, you can ruff his (say) spade return, cash diamonds and claim 12 tricks.

West does best to discard but you win the diamond and ruff a diamond with the king of hearts. You return to the jack of hearts (drawing West's third heart) and run diamonds, coming down to the king-queen of spades and ace of clubs in hand. Now cross to the ace of clubs and force out the ace of spades, that second-round promoted spade being your 12th trick.

Say those two rounds of hearts reveal a four-one split. You now need diamonds 3-2 (however unlikely that may be). Return to the jack of hearts, back to the ace of clubs and (try to) run diamonds.

Dealer: North, Vulnerability: North-South

Teams

	♠ - ♥ QJ2 ♦ AKQ532 ♣ Q953	
♠ 10873 ♥ 1083 ♦ 4 ♣ K10862	N W E S	♠ AJ952 ♥ 97 ♦ J1096 ♣ J7
	♠ KQ64 ♥ AK654 ♦ 87 ♣ A4	

S	W	N	E
		1♦	1♠ (1)
2♥	3♠ (2)	4♥ (3)	Pass
6♥ (4)	End		

(1) Would not overcall if vulnerable.
(2) Blocking to the (nine-trick) level of the fit.
(3) Partner's 2♥ guarantees a fifth heart (South would make a negative double with only four).
(4) Knows partner has a void spade.

Contract: 6♥, Opening Lead: ♦4 / ♠8

Table Two — ♠8 lead. You must discard from dummy — say a club (mistakenly ruff and you're down). East wins the ace and switches to the jack of clubs (best). You win the ace and must ruff a spade.

You now cash the queen of hearts and overtake the jack with the king, admittedly failing if hearts are 4-1. When both opponents follow to two rounds, you cash the ace, drawing the last trump then enjoy the king-queen of spades and dummy's ace-king-queen of diamonds. That's 12 tricks made via the four minor-suit tops, the king-queen of spades and six hearts (including that spade ruff in dummy).

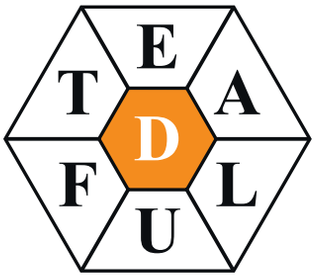
andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

Brain Trainer

EASY	8	+ 12	+ 8	x 8	÷ 16	x 6	+ 12	x 2	+ 4	÷ 49
MEDIUM	36	x 5	TREBLE IT	-⅔ OF IT	÷ 6	x 7	+ 40	DOUBLE IT	– 56	÷ 12
HARDER	80	+½ OF IT	65% OF IT	x 4	TREBLE IT	TREBLE IT	– 8	÷ 14	DOUBLE IT	– 39

ANSWER

Polygon

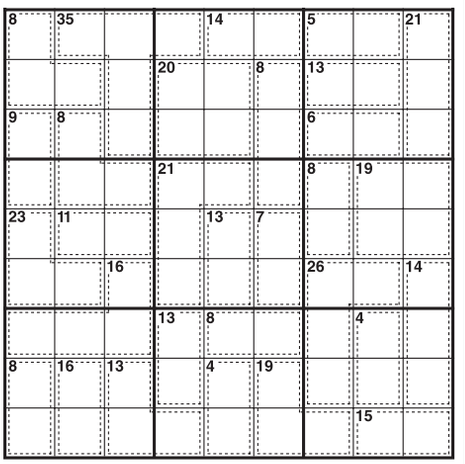


From these letters, make words of **three** or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives.
How you rate 15 words, average; 20, good; 25, very good; 31, excellent

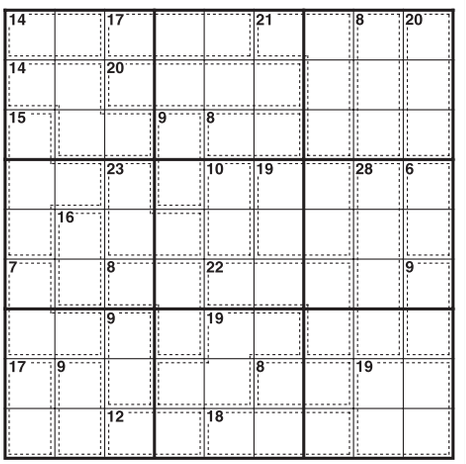
Yesterday's answers

bib, bis, bish, bris, brush, bub, bur, burb, bus, bush, hub, hubris, rib, rub, **rubbish**, shrub, sib, sub, urbs

Killer Moderate No 10,870



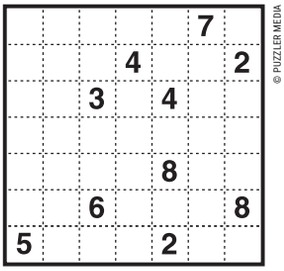
Killer Tough No 10,871



As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Cluelines Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Cell Blocks No 5799



Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

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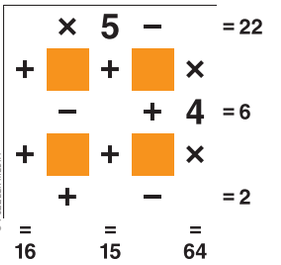
Set Square No 4418



Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

Please note, BODMAS does not apply

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Solutions

Quick Cryptic 3376

■	B	C	S	■	C	A	T	C	H	Y
B	O	R	R	O	W	E	R	■	I	O
■	U	■	E	■	I	A	R	D	O	U	R
S	T	E	A	L	T	H	Y	■	Y	■	S
■	■	T	■	C	■	O	■	■	E	■	■
G	O	B	I	■	H	A	N	D	S	O	F	F
R	■	O	■	C	■	■	I	■	L	■	■
W	I	N	N	I	P	E	G	■	G	U	Y	S
G	■	■	A	■	A	■	H	■	■	■	■	■
I	■	G	S	T	R	A	T	E	G	Y	■	■
I	N	T	E	N	T	■	I	■	I	A	■	■
A	■	A	R	E	S	O	N	A	T	E	■	■
F	L	U	R	R	Y	■	H	■	G	E	■	■

Codeword 5915

S	Y	N	O	D	■	A	W	F	U	L	■	B
O	■	■	Y	E	T	■	L	■	L	E	A	■
J	U	D	G	E	■	T	I	A	R	A	■	K
U	■	I	■	■	A	■	G	■	M	■	E	■
M	E	T	E	O	R	I	T	E	■	A	I	R
B	■	T	■	B	■	N	■	O	■	■	T	■
O	B	O	I	S	T	■	G	L	A	S	S	Y
O	■	■	C	■	S	■	E	■	A	■	I	■
E	A	R	■	E	X	C	I	T	A	B	L	E
Q	■	I	■	N	■	H	■	■	L	■	L	■
U	■	S	E	I	Z	E	■	F	I	E	L	D
A	P	E	■	T	■	M	O	O	■	■	E	■
L	■	R	H	Y	M	E	■	G	A	V	E	L

Kakuro 4414

3	9	■	5	1	■	9	2	3
1	4	2	9	3	■	7	8	4	9
■	■	1	6	■	7	1	■	1	8
2	1	■	3	8	9	■	9	5	■
9	5	8	4	6	■	■	6	2	■
■	■	2	5	■	■	9	3	8	7	1
■	7	9	■	1	7	2	■	8	3	■
7	3	■	8	3	■	9	3	■	■	■
9	6	8	3	■	2	6	1	4	8
4	3	1	■	3	8	■	2	9	■

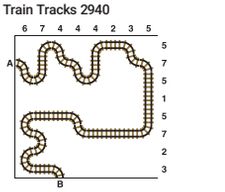
Sudoku 17,013

5	1	4	2	9	6	8	3	7
8	2	7	5	4	3	1	6	9
9	3	6	1	7	8	4	2	5
4	7	8	6	2	5	3	9	1
3	6	9	7	1	4	2	5	8
1	5	2	3	8	9	7	4	6
2	9	1	4	6	7	5	8	3
7	8	5	9	3	2	6	1	4
6	4	3	8	5	1	9	7	2

GK Crossword 350

C	O	M	O	R	O	S	■	O	C	C	I	P	U	T
A	■	A	■	I	■	E	■	I	■	A	■	A	■	I
T	E	R	R	Y	H	A	L	L	■	P	E	R	O	N
S	■	T	■	A	■	S	■	E	■	E	■	S	■	S
■	I	N	L	A	N	D	R	E	V	E	N	U	E	■
D	■	A	■	■	A	■	S	■	E	■	I	■	L	■
E	L	L	I	P	S	I	S	■	A	R	M	P	I	T
A	■	A	■	L	■	P	■	D	■	■	O	■	■	■
C	U	B	A	N	S	■	G	A	M	E	S	H	O	W
O	■	O	■	A	■	G	■	T	■	■	U	■	N	■
N	A	G	A	M	U	N	C	H	E	T	T	Y	■	■
B	■	A	■	A	■	O	■	H	■	G	■	F	■	■
L	U	R	C	H	■	M	A	G	D	A	L	E	N	E
U	■	D	■	A	■	O	■	E	■	N	■	N	■	R
E	V	E	R	T	O	N	■	N	I	E	L	S	E	N

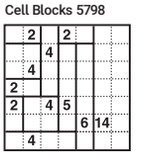
Train Tracks 2940



Sudoku 17,014

5	6	9	8	4	3	1	7	2
1	4	2	5	7	9	3	6	8
7	3	8	1	2	6	4	5	9
9	7	4	2	1	8	5	3	6
8	1	6	7	3	5	2	9	4
2	5	3	9	6	4	7	8	1
3	2	1	6	8	7	9	4	5
6	9	7	4	5	1	8	2	3
4	8	5	3	9	2	6	1	7

Cell Blocks 5798



Set Square 4417

Lexica 9045

S	M	A	S	H	■	■	■	■
■	O	■	■	■	U	■	■	■
■	D	■	■	F	E	E	■	■
H	U	R	L	■	■	■	■	■
■	L	■	Y	■	■	■	■	■
R	E	D	■	■	■	■	■	■

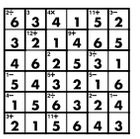
Sudoku 17,015

4	2	6	8	3	7	5	9	1
1	3	5	6	9	4	8	2	7
7	9	8	5	1	2	6	4	3
8	7	9	1	4	6	2	3	5
2	6	1	3	7	5	4	8	9
3	5	4	9	2	8	7	1	6
6	4	3	2	5	9	1	7	8
9	8	7	4	6	1	3	5	2
5	1	2	7	8	3	9	6	4

Futoshiki 5455

5	3	2	4	1
2	1	5	> 3	4
1	4	3	5	2
3	2	4	1	5
4	< 5	1	2	< 3

KenKen 6907



Lexica 9046

S	C	O	U	T	■	■	■	■
■	A	■	■	A	■	■	■	■
■	J	■	■	P	■	■	■	■
O	L	D	■	A	■	■	■	■
L	■	O	I	L	■	■	■	■
T	E	R	N	■	P	■	■	■

Killer 10,868

1	9	8	6	4	7	2	3	5
5	2	4	1	8	3	7	9	6
7	6	3	2	5	9	1	8	4
4	3	7	9	6	8	5	2	1
9	5	6	3	2	1	8	4	7
2	8	1	5	7	4	3	6	9
6	4	5	8	1	2	9	7	3
8	7	9	4	3	5	6	1	2
3	1	2	7	9	6	4	5	8

Killer 10,869

5	6	4	1	8	2	7	3	9
3	7	9	5	4	6	8	1	2
8	2	1	3	9	7	6	4	5
6	1	3	8	5	9	4	2	7
9	5	7	4	2	1	3	8	6
4	8	2	6	7	3	9	5	1
2	3	6	9	1	8	5	7	4
1	4	8	7	6	5	2	9	3
7	9	5	2	3	4	1	6	8

Today's solutions

Concise Quintagram
1 Jaw
2 Clerk
3 Gremlin
4 Heather
5 Bridesmaid

Cryptic Quintagram
1 News
2 Images
3 Earnest
4 Cabinet
5 Ecstatic

Sakuro 4817

Brain Trainer
Easy 4
Medium 37
Harder 361

Word watch

Tammy (b) A cloth for straining sauce, soup etc (*Collins*) **Nychthemeron** (c) A 24-hour period (*OED*) **Bêche-de-mer** (a) A sea slug (*Chambers*)

Chess — Winning Move

1 Rxh7+! exposes the king sufficiently to force mate: 1 ... Nxh7 (1 ... Kxh7 2 Rh3+ mates) 2 Re8+ Nf8 3 Rxf8+ (3 Qxd4 will also win but the text forces mate) 3 ... Kh7 4 Rh8+! Kxh8 5 f8Q+ Kh7 6 Qg7 mate

Quiz

1 Sherlock Holmes **2** Dublin **3** Maori **4** Notting Hill Carnival **5** *Coronation Street* **6** HMP Dartmoor **7** Charlotte Brontë **8** Robert the Bruce **9** William Lamb or Lord Melbourne **10** Galliano **11** *Vir Heroicus Sublimi* **12** Muon **13** Ryan Holiday **14** Lotus **15** *Fight Club*

THE TIMES

11.08.26

MindGames

For extra puzzles See page 10

Word watch
David Parfitt

Tammy
a A standby or understudy
b A cloth for straining sauce, soup etc
c A small aggressive variety of chicken

Nychthemeron
a A double negative
b A prehistoric fishlike reptile
c A 24-hour period

Bêche-de-mer
a A sea slug
b A palm producing a huge nut
c A pirate

Answers on page 15

Sudoku

Mild No 17,016

							9
		3			8	7	5
5			4				3
	9			8			7
	3	6	1		7		
7	8			6		1	
		2		9			6
9			6	3	1		
	4		2			9	

Difficult No 17,017

		8					
3						9	6
2	6			1		7	8
	3			8	4		1
6							
	1			6	3		2
8	2			4		6	5
7						3	9
		9					

Super fiendish No 17,018

			3		5	9		
1	9				7			2
				8		1	2	9
3	2						6	7
9	6	1		2				
6			5				4	3
		5	1		9			

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Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

The Times Daily Quiz
Olav Bjortomt

1 O Henry's 1904 story *The Adventures of Shamrock Jolnes* parodied which detective?

2 The U2 frontman Bono was born and raised in which capital city?

3 Ta moko is a ritual body art practised by which indigenous people of New Zealand?

4 In 1977, Darcus Howe became chairman of which London carnival's development committee?

5 Freshco is a fictional supermarket in which ITV soap?

6 Opened in 1809, which men's prison in Princetown, Devon shares its name with a national park?

ALAMY

7 Three of which author's siblings died while she was writing the 1849 novel *Shirley*?

8 The First War of Scottish Independence ended in 1328 with which king on the Scottish throne?

9 Which future prime minister married Lady Caroline Ponsonby in 1805?

10 The yellow bird is a Caribbean cocktail that gets its vibrant colour from which golden Italian liqueur?

11 The Latin title of which 1950-51 abstract expressionist painting by Barnett Newman means "Man, heroic and sublime"?

12 The physicist Isidor Rabi exclaimed: "Who ordered that?" upon the discovery of which particle in 1936?

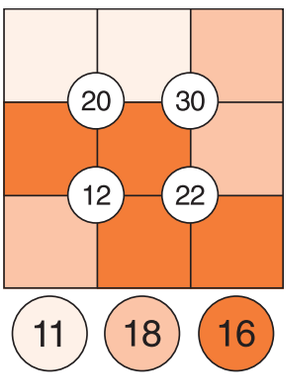
13 *Trust Me, I'm Lying* (2012) and *Ego is the Enemy* (2016) are books by which American marketeer?

14 Which English sports carmaker won its seventh and final F1 constructors' championship in 1978?

15 Helena Bonham Carter plays Marla Singer in which pictured film?

Answers on page 15

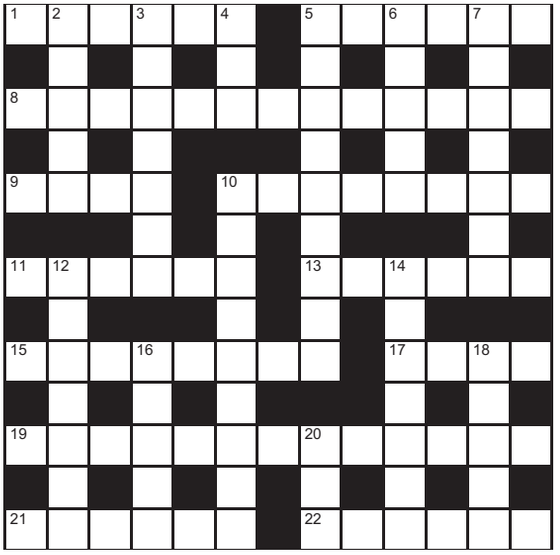
Sakuro
No 4817



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

For interactive puzzles visit thetimes.com

The Times Quick Cryptic
No 3377 by Mara



Across
1 Tear in injured part of eye (6)
5 Building for animals far from rickety (6)
8 Sheffield steel, perhaps? (9,4)
9 Check old embargo (4)
10 Hide flask aloft (6,2)
11 Scatter drapes all over the place (6)
13 Favourite pushed back by inches, part of a foot (6)
15 Al breaking up (8)
17 Rolling over, touch instrument (4)
19 Rainproof hats destroyed without thinking (6-7)
21 Slur about leader in loathsome old dictator (6)
22 Gift you shouldn't have loaned (6)

Down
2 Flee with girl, forgetting pen (5)
3 Infernal, smokier winds (7)
4 Wood remains after fire (3)
5 Hungriest when cooking? Certainly! (4,5)
6 Article on set for cherub (5)
7 European is entertained by attraction in free time (7)
10 Wicked running after perfect game (9)
12 Rapt, if a novel is sweet (7)
14 Talc she sprinkled in bag (7)
16 Shade of pink right within something black (5)
18 Top bean ultimately for chocolate (5)
20 Every other bit of carpet fitting (3)

Yesterday's solution on page 15

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- Experience an Aarti Ceremony in Varanasi
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- Return flights from London and regional airports plus overseas transportation
- Nine nights half-board in four and five-star hotels plus one night in flight
- One night on one of Kerala's famous houseboats cruising the backwaters
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Christmas in Prague

December 23, 2026

Discover the exceptional architecture and fascinating history of the capital of Czechia on this Christmas break in Prague. A city tour will introduce highlights including St Wenceslas Square and the Charles Bridge, explore Ceský Krumlov in Southern Bohemia and enjoy a lunch cruise on the Vltava River.

Price includes

- Return flights from London plus overseas transportation
- Five nights in a four-star hotel
- Five breakfasts, two lunches, five dinners, and a festive welcome drink
- Discover Prague's rich history on a city tour
- Enjoy a leisurely lunch on the river Vltava
- Guided tour of Ceský Krumlov
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Christmas in Malta

December 22, 2026

There is so much to discover on the small island of Malta, which boasts a mild climate, even during the winter months. On this Christmas break you'll delve into its history as you explore cities built and fortified by the Knights of St John, take a cruise around Valletta's famous Grand Harbour and have the option to journey to its lovely sister island, Gozo.

Price includes

- Return flights from London plus overseas transportation
- Five nights half-board in a four-star hotel
- Five breakfasts, one Christmas Day buffet lunch and five dinners including a Christmas Eve buffet dinner
- Enjoy a cruise around Valletta's Grand Harbour
- Explore the Unesco-listed city of Valletta. Visit the saluting battery and experience the firing of one of the eight replica cannons
- Visit to the Mosta Dome
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Christmas in Stratford upon Avon

December 23, 2026

Celebrate Christmas in William Shakespeare's enchanting hometown, the historic market town of Stratford-upon-Avon. Picture timber-framed buildings decorated for the celebrations, twinkling lights reflecting off the River Avon, and an unmistakable festive magic filling the air. We'll soak up the spirit of the season, exploring charming streets brimming with independent shops and cosy cafes as well as discovering more about the life and works of William Shakespeare. Christmas Day brings us together for all the traditional celebrations, creating memories with our fellow travellers in this storybook setting. Our adventure also whisks us to the magnificent Warwick Castle, where centuries of history, myths and legends spring to life around every corner. This is Christmas with a difference, exploring, discovering and celebrating together in one of England's most captivating towns.

Price includes

- Four nights in a four-star hotel
- Four breakfasts, Christmas lunch with a glass of wine. Four dinners, and welcome tea or coffee on arrival
- Walking tour of Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon
- Visit Warwick Castle
- Just You Holiday Director as your host and specialist local guide

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Christmas in Brighton

December 23, 2026

Celebrate Christmas beside the sea with a festive escape to Brighton. Stroll along the iconic seafront, admire the spectacular Royal Pavilion dressed for the season and soak up the city's lively atmosphere. With delicious festive dining, time to explore at your own pace and the company of like-minded solo travellers, it's a wonderful way to enjoy a relaxed and memorable Christmas break.

Price includes

- Four nights in a four-star hotel
- Four breakfasts, four dinners, Christmas Day lunch with a glass of wine, including welcome tea or coffee and mince pies on arrival
- Enjoy a visit to Brighton's famous Royal Pavilion
- Guided tour of Brighton
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